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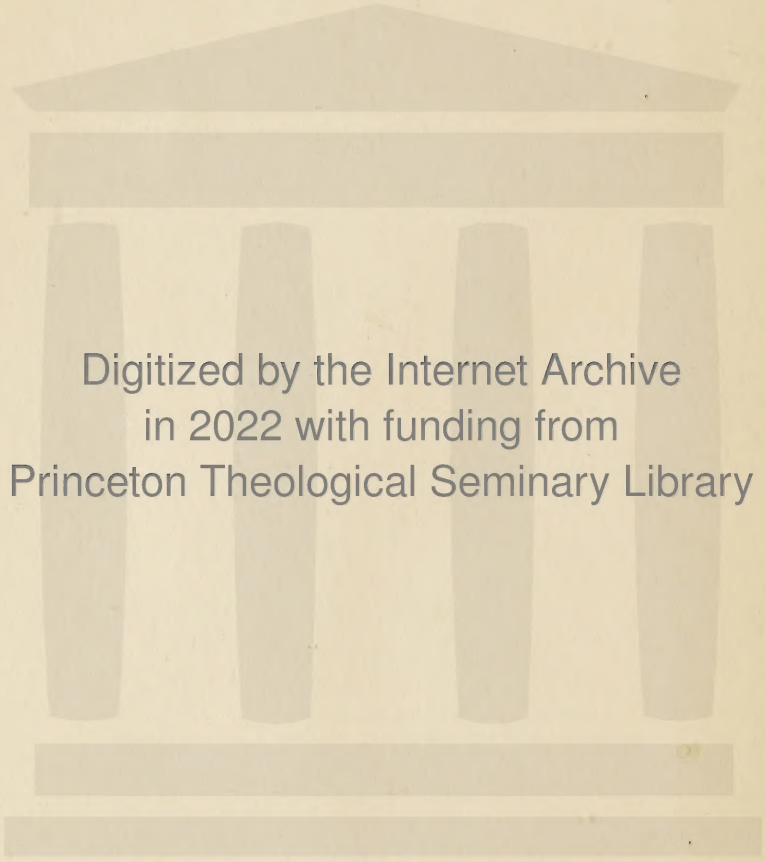
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THE
WOMAN ON THE FARM

The Century Rural Life Books

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THE WOMAN ON THE FARM

BY

MARY MEEK ATKESON

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To the Woman on the Farm in America

This Book is Dedicated

FOREWORD

Introducing the woman on the farm—her work, her problems, and her point of view on life—is the purpose of the present volume. In its preparation the farm woman herself has given much assistance to the writer. Nearly a thousand special correspondents, representing every State in the Union, have taken time in their busy lives to write their views upon one or more of the subjects here discussed. The writer has met and talked with many hundreds of farm women at field day and organization meetings in many parts of the country. And through the courtesy of Dr. C. J. Galpin of the Department of Agriculture, she has had the privilege of reading the hundreds of letters from farm women, received in 1920 by *Farm and Home* and the seven thousand letters from farm women received in 1922 in a contest by *The Farmer's Wife.* Other smaller groups of letters were available in Department of Agriculture publications.

It is true that on every subject the farm women of America hold many diverse views. Each makes a path for herself in her thinking. But the writer has tried in the midst of their differences to present those things which seem to her most typical and most American. Nothing is mentioned in these pages which has not actually been worked out in some farm community in

America, though of course no one community has done or could do them all. But the writer has listed the successful practices in the hope that a knowledge of them will be helpful to other farm neighborhoods and to other leaders of community life.

And in addition the writer has tried to give on every subject the "farthest look" of the woman on the farm—her ideas of what may be worked out in the future in our American country life. The reader may think her too optimistic in some instances. But the woman on the farm is optimistic; she is working at a big task which she has no thought of quitting, and she needs the inspiration of a bright outlook toward the future. That some of her hopes may not be realized is very probable, but whatever happens she will still be working and making eager plans for what is to come next.

The writer wishes especially to thank Dr. C. J. Galpin, editor of the Century Rural Life Series, for assistance in planning this book, and her many farm women acquaintances, whose whole-souled appreciation of her efforts to present their point of view has greatly encouraged her in her work. Acknowledgment is also made of the kind permission of the editors of *Good Housekeeping, McCall's Magazine, The Pictorial Review, The Country Gentleman,* and *The Farmer's Wife* to use in this book articles by the writer which have appeared in those publications.

MARY MEEK ATKESON.

Lawnvale Farm,
Buffalo, West Virginia,
June 10, 1924.

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THE WOMAN ON THE FARM

THE WOMAN ON THE FARM

CHAPTER I

THE AMERICAN FARM WOMAN

IN all the recent discussion of the American woman there has been but little mention of one feminine type—and that the one which is most typically American of them all—the American farm woman. As no other woman in the nation, she is the product of our soil and our institutions and our ideals and aspirations. She is as typical as Lincoln is of the true American spirit. And if we seek a symbol of all that is most truly American in womanhood, we can do no better than to present this modern woman on the farm, with her strong shoulders and her happy uplifted face and her spirit of service to the nation of to-morrow. Mentally, spiritually, and physically she would be an enduring inspiration to all the women of the world.

It is true that she is not a different type, in the sense that the peasant woman of Europe is different from her urban sisters, for in America the continual shift of population carries the farm woman to the city and the

city woman out upon the farm, in an unending readjustment. The difference is not in her appearance, nor in her education, nor in her racial background, but in the vigor and strength of the countrywoman's spirit. For every woman on the farm in America, who is at all efficient, must have the strong body and the vigorous mind and the undying spirit of the pioneer. In her environment she is the real descendant of those courageous women who crossed the Alleghanies in the early days and helped to found a home in the forest, where they fought shoulder to shoulder with their husbands against their common foes—the rigors of a pioneer life, the Indians, and the wild beasts of the forest. And their common victory in the midst of innumerable perils was due quite as much to her prowess as to his. "The chief figure of the American West," writes Emerson Hough, "the figure of the age, is not the long-haired, fringed-legging man riding a raw-boned pony, but the gaunt, sad-faced woman sitting on the front seat of the wagon, following her lord where he might lead, her face hidden in the same ragged sunbonnet which had crossed the Appalachians and the Missouri long before. That was America, my brethren! There was the seed of America's wealth. There was the great romance of all America,—the woman in the sunbonnet; and not, after all, the hero with the rifle across his saddle horn. Who has written her story? Who has painted her picture?" There was no doubt of her equality in those days because she showed herself equally capable in all the tasks of their life together, and she was proud to know that this was true. Her position had all the dignity and age-

old strength of the real helpmate in everything that touched the welfare of the family and the home. And when she launched upon a career of her own, as did the sturdy Anne Bailey of the Appalachian frontier, who became an Indian scout, she was accorded all the honor that was her due by the men and women of the settlements.

Of course conditions have changed greatly in America in the past hundred years. But even yet farm life is decidedly a vigorous adventure. The woman who succeeds in that environment must still be strong in body, quick of brain, and indomitable in spirit. And in the farm life of to-day she has even more need for that adaptability which has been so necessary in the past. Our country life is in a state of rapid change, and many an inefficient family is being ground beneath the wheels of its progress. For the good old days of the early American frontier, with their crude methods and open-handed hospitality, are passing, by successive stages, into an organization of forces and a cultured ease and refinement similar to that prevailing in the cities. And the woman on the farm to-day, with her husband and her children, stands somewhere midway, alternately torn by influences toward the old and toward the new.

It is a most difficult position to hold with stability and common sense. And it is the woman on the farm, with her keen sense of values in life, who must decide where her family shall stand. On one side of her may live a family of the old days, with ideas and living conditions little removed from those of the early settler's cabin in the forest, or a family of recent immigrants

with the customs of their old home in Europe. On the other side may live a family of wealthy and cultured city people, who maintain a country home for health or pleasure. Yet somehow under these difficult conditions the woman on the farm must evolve a wholesome home life—not too much like the one nor too much like the other—so that her children will be happy and contented and equally at home in conditions the most primitive and the most modern.

It is a most important matter in the happiness of her family. For whenever the country home fails to provide a proper environment the young people become restless and the older people discouraged and unhappy, because they feel that their standards have lost all stability. They begin to feel that every one else is better off than they are. And the result is in many communities a wholesale exodus to town, where the country-bred families are usually neither happier nor more prosperous than they were in the open country. But the wise woman knows that a move to town will probably not improve their condition. So she keeps for her family the best of the old customs of the country life of the past, and adds to them as much as she can of the attractions of city life so that her children will feel that the modern world is not passing them by. If she succeeds she will have the satisfaction of having her children love the farm and farm life, and the country dwellers of the future will be descended from the same hardy and vigorous stock as are the rural people of today. But if she fails, then our American country life as we have known it and loved it—the beautiful and

inspiring and hearty country life of Washington and the Western pioneers—will be a thing of the past, and our fields will be tilled in the future by an ignorant peasantry.

But those who know the American farm woman have few fears that she will fail in anything. Our country life has set so high a standard for her that she is not only energetic but highly adaptable, and when a change comes she is ready to make the most of the new conditions. This was shown most dramatically in many parts of America during the World War, when the country people responded instantly to every patriotic appeal. And with the sudden rise in prices hundreds of farm homes were fitted with water and electric-light systems and other conveniences of the cities, showing clearly that all the American farm people need is a fair economic opportunity, to bring their homes to the level of the most cultured in America. And when the development of the radio brought a new convenience to be had at a reasonable price, the farm homes responded instantly. It is estimated that there are now no less than one hundred and forty-five thousand radio receiving-sets in the farm homes of America. The farm people are not backward in seeking the benefits of modern improvements when they have the money to spend.

But though modern conveniences are on their way to the country, they have not yet arrived to such an extent that the farm woman's resourcefulness has lost its value. She still has many opportunities to make much of little, to be a courageous pioneer in rural social af-

fairs, and by her main strength to provide comforts for her family. So the woman on the farm to-day is perhaps the busiest woman in the nation. She is the arbiter of health and happiness in her family; she is an important factor in her husband's success on the farm; she often carries on a career of her own in some side-line and takes more or less part in a wide variety of community affairs. But if she is the busiest of women, she is also one of the happiest. She finds little to complain of in her lot. Mr. Sherman J. Lowell, former Master of the National Grange, once remarked that in all his acquaintance he had never known a discontented country woman. And a farm woman in the State of Washington writes me: "I think if you asked the farm women as to our life on the farm, you 'd find as a whole we 're a pretty well contented set."

She is conscious of her worth. She never has any doubts about the vital necessity of her services to the family and to the community; the need for them is too apparent to all eyes. The home could scarcely exist without her, or her husband's business be successful. She is still the real lady—the "loaf-giver"—and she works in partnership with nature in real creative power. So her service makes life beautiful and rich for her in the midst of her toil and her days are filled with the satisfaction of well-directed effort. In this respect she is much better off than the average city woman, from whom so many of the really vital tasks of the family life have been taken away by other agencies, one by one, until only the husks are left in her hands. Whatever task she occupies herself with, in the absence of primitive

hand-service, she is apt to feel herself more an ornament or a convenience than a sustaining factor in the family life. And the restlessness and discontent which this feeling engenders is often more harmful in its effects than any degree of physical weariness.

One of the most striking characteristics of the average country woman is her optimism, in the face of all discouragements. It would seem that in the past few years, when the unbalanced condition of the world's trade has resulted in low prices for everything the farmer has to sell, and high prices for everything he has to buy, conditions would intimidate the most stout-hearted. And yet thousands of farm women the country over expressed themselves in letters as hopeful for the country life of the future. Even those who were pessimistic deplored only the farmer's economic losses, and showed no lack of appreciation of the country home. For the average American farm woman is country-minded. She loves the soil and believes in it and believes in the ultimate success of the people on the farm. The country is to her the home of her spirit as well as the home of her body. For however poverty-stricken and unsightly the immediate farm surroundings may be, country life is always beautiful to those who love it. The ever-changing beauty of the trees, the hills or plains, the clouds, the sheep feeding on the hillsides or the silhouettes of grazing cattle along the sky line always invite the eyes. And the morning fog in the valley, the green of the fields and the flowers of the meadows form scenes that the country woman thinks are more beautiful than any picture painted by an artist.

And when she looks across the fields she enjoys thinking: "This land is all our own, no rent to pay every month, and no landlord to interfere. This ground produces bread for our children and feed for our stock, and some to spare for the hungry city people. Whatever happens it will provide for all our real necessities."

There is an elemental security in life on the farm which appeals to a woman's deepest instincts. She feels that whatever else may change with the winds of popular enthusiasm or political power, she, at least, stands upon the bedrock of life. "One generation passeth away," she might say with the writer of Ecclesiastes, "and another cometh; but the earth abideth forever." A Wisconsin woman writes: "The very fact that many farm women are working calmly, patiently along, without all the modern improvements shows that they are deriving a certain other satisfaction from life. Just as the plant sends its roots down into the earth, and the rose, or the potato draws up materials for its individual existence, beauty or usefulness, so does each person's life absorb from the surroundings the thing which it requires for its needs. We, the farm women, are where we belong. I feel that this close-to-nature elemental existence, is the fullest, richest source of emotional satisfaction. And we pay the price. We give our services, and we give up the superficial, sensational stimulants of society and fashion, so we feel square and honest as we take our gifts."

Their pleasures are simple ones but they are real pleasures. A New York farm woman writes me: "I wish

people generally knew what we on the farms know—that there is comfort, real comfort, in plain living and calm, clear-headed thinking, in the sweet old-fashioned way of working till you are tired, commending yourself to God at night, and enjoying a good deep sleep till morning breaks and you wake up rested. In walking over the fields in the spring to see how the 'new-seeded' are coming, in watching the different birds come back from the south each spring. In tending the little lambs, and chickens and calves, in watching things grow, in making your own delicious butter, in picking the raspberries from your own patch, and in getting the first peas and sweet corn, and in the fall in gathering the apples from the trees that your own grandfather planted on the farm years ago. They are simple things, all of them, but there are the simple virtues back of them that make life worth living."

Nor is the farm woman lacking in culture. It is not always recognized, though it is true, that the average farm woman is better read and better informed on the questions of the day than is the average city woman. Perhaps this is chiefly because there are fewer distractions in the country and her rest time can be spent in reading. She may not keep up with every fad of the moment but on the worth-while things which are the basis of culture, she is well informed. She develops a pioneer spirit in her sensitiveness to truth, and checks up every printed statement with her own experience with life. The fact that she has little time for reading makes her turn a new thought over and over in her mind, a

process which is far more educative than that of the woman in the midst of things who may accept what she reads without much question.

And she has thought long and deeply about the fundamental values of life. She has learned from her own experience that the greatest joy and contentment come from hard work at worth-while tasks and eager service for those you love. And she feels that nowhere in the world can her children learn those moral values which are always the highest good in life, and develop real stability of character, so well as in the country home. There they can learn the secrets of life, and responsibility in caring for helpless young animals, and can realize the suffering brought about by the neglect of an obligation. And this will secure their success and happiness in after years, wherever they may be.

It is true that she also knows the imperfections of life on the farm and in the country community. But she usually has very definite ideas about how these faults may be remedied and she is ready and willing to assist in the task. Her attitude was shown clearly by one of the women at the Agricultural Conference called by President Harding. One of the men speakers had been bewailing the hard times. "Why," he said, "the very bottom has dropped out of country life." "Well," said the woman calmly, "if the bottom has dropped out of it, we'll just have to put another one in. I've done that myself to the coal-scuttle and the feed-bucket many a time." And in the discussion which followed she showed that she had very practical ideas about how to put the bottom into the immediate situation. It is this

eager and capable spirit in the woman on the farm that has always made life livable in the country and will continue to make it so.

In common with other American women the farm woman has come to realize in the past few years that all her vital interests are not bound by the home, nor even by the farm. Her outlook is broadening very rapidly. With the development of better transportation and better roads country young people are brought more and more under the influence of community and town conditions. For their business dealings, recreation, instruction, religious training and amusement they are going to town. Indeed all the country roads are leading to town in these days. The farm woman knows well enough that many of these influences are not what she wishes for her children, and yet, as an individual, she is powerless to change them. For this reason she is taking an active interest in outside affairs and entering more and more into work for the public welfare. Even though at present her position as the center of the farm home leaves her little time and strength for other activities, she is feeling the need of participation just the same. And when she thinks of home improvements, particularly of gas and electricity which would release her from many of the harder tasks, she thinks first of the time and energy which can be saved to go into work for her community. And as the farm home develops, it is likely that many of these strong and capable women will find time for all those civic duties which are quite as important as good food and clothing to the well-being of the family.

Since this idea is undoubtedly growing, along with an eager search for apparatus which will improve the working conditions in the farm home, the country woman may soon take a much greater part in public affairs. And by coöperating with the neighbors to accomplish some object for the general good she will help to lift the status of the rural home. She will see to it that all the local agencies for health, recreation, education, social life, and religion do their duty as they should and assist the home in the training of her children. For she wishes her children to have all the advantages of a well-rounded development which will make them fit members of any community in which they may live. In these endeavors, of course, the farm woman will not work alone, but with her husband and her children, toward the goal of a better country life for the future.

And as her experience enlarges it will not be surprising if the farm woman takes a high rank in the general women's organizations. Certainly her quiet, unhurried common sense would prove to be excellent ballast in such organizations to steady the ship against the chance winds of propaganda and intrigue. Already she has been a steadying element in some of the rural associations for fifty years and more. Perhaps, too, in the multiplicity of modern organizations, she will help the leaders to do some real thinking on the public welfare—down to the fundamentals of life—and bring about such a reorganization of forces as will cover all the actual needs with a few important agencies, broad enough in their principles to enlist both city and country in their ranks.

This is the greatest need to-day among those who are seeking to promote the public welfare in America.

In politics the country woman is already taking part in some localities on school boards and in the State legislatures. But as power areas spread over the country places, the prices for agricultural products rise and the woman is released from some of her heaviest tasks, she will undoubtedly take a much larger part. She will become the leader in a crusade for a higher standard of living in the country districts. And all the political parties will be the better for the infusion of her sternly practical and capable pioneer spirit into the public life of the nation.

CHAPTER II

THE FARM HOME

OUR home farm lies in a broad and fertile valley through which run the shining rails of one of the great railroad thoroughfares between the East and the West, and when I was a child I was fascinated by the great passenger trains which every few hours went roaring by with their loads of human freight. In the daytime I ran to climb the big front gate to see them pass, and if I was awake at night I sat up in bed to see the bright flashing comet which was the midnight express. "Who are all these people on the trains?" I asked myself, "and where are they going?" But my childish imagination simply could not picture a world big enough to hold them all. I felt that they must have come from another planet to whirl thus past our farmyard gate, and belong to a race of people very different from the home folks that I knew.

And sometimes when I had grown quite weary of conjecturing about them I turned about to look at myself from their point of view. I wondered what they were thinking of the little girl in the blue gingham dress, of the big front gate and the grove of trees, the huge barns and the old brick farmhouse, as they swept past our door. All this was far too much for my imagination,

also, but it was such a fascinating game that even yet, whenever I think of the farm people I begin again to wonder what the people of the crowded cities are thinking about us.

Probably the men and women of the cities are not greatly impressed by our rolling fields and scattered houses; the wealth of the city is packed into such small spaces that our natural wealth must seem thin and unimportant. And they do not see at all those intangible things which are the greatest value of the farm home. There is our farm, for instance. It is much more than its acres of wheat and timber and pasture lands. It was not only my birthplace, but the birthplace of my father, also. Many an evening around the sitting-room fire I heard the romantic story of how, long ago, my grandfather came down the river with all his little savings in his pocket, looking for a spot upon which to found his home and his fortune. So many miles had he gone, he had begun to fear that in all this Western world there was no place that he could enjoy—when suddenly the big steamer upon which he was travelling rounded a bend in the river and there among the friendly hills was a lovely valley, rich green with the lush grasses of new-cleared lands, and he knew in his heart that he had found his home at last.

I knew the primitive log cabin on the river bank where he had spent the first struggling years. I knew the story of how the virgin forests, which covered much of the land, had been cut away, the big orchards planted and the plans made for the house that was to be. And I had heard many times of how the house was built of

bricks of clay from the hill. I saw the wooden molds into which the soft clay had been pressed and asked a thousand questions about how they were baked so firm and hard that the walls would endure for generations. I saw the heavy chisels that shaped the stones for the foundations, and the queer, one-sided planes with which the simple wooden moldings had been cut. I knew the history of every tree on the lawn before the house, how this great oak had been a forest tree under which perhaps the Indians had camped when they came hunting, how this giant pine had been carried, a little sapling, on my grandfather's shoulder to be set in the new door-yard, and how the children of the family had insisted that this favorite tree and that be added to the family collection. And once when a tree had blown down and I had been asked to name its successor, I had felt that I was making history, too.

I heard of my grandfather's reputation for integrity and justice, so that all who knew him trusted him, and of his care that even the smallest task be done with honest workmanship. I could well believe this, for I had often marvelled at the nicety of the wood-work of the huge mantelpieces and cupboards of the old house. And I remember, too, how my grandfather when he was old and helpless used to lie on a couch outside the door, his dim old eyes upon the smooth green lawn, the great trees and the sturdy old brick house. "What do you find to think about all the day long?" someone asked him. He smiled a lovely smile. "I am enjoying the work of my hands," he said.

All this the people on the speeding trains could not

know. Nor could they know all that varied play-world of meadow and orchard and creek and hillside where we farm children went so busily about our small concerns every day. Each moment brought its own experience with little wild things, with opening buds and ripening nuts and berries, with rainbows and sunrises, and all the thousand wonders of our country world. In all seasons and at work or play we had a continual contact with nature which gave a solid foundation for all our later learning. Had we been city children our experiences would have been as numerous, but they would have been more scattered and artificial, far more difficult to weld into a sound understanding of life. We might have lived in a rented house, or even have moved from one furnished apartment to another. Perhaps we should have been richer and had more leisure, but no wealth nor city comforts, it seems to me, could have repaid us for the loss of that honest old farmhouse and the living tradition of that grandfather of ours.

And so I say again that the greatest value of the farm home to the nation is not its bushels of wheat and corn, its herds of cattle and droves of hogs, but those intangible things which are the very essence of our American life. Traditions are soon lost in the cities; the changing fashion sets the pace, and the attention is continually distracted by new amusements and new methods of work. But down on the farm the pace is still set by the changing seasons and the good old days of Washington and Jefferson and of the Western pioneers still shed their influence through the fireside stories and the simple heirlooms about the family home. The children of

the family circle learn very early to love the dignity and unhurried vigor of old times as well as the eagerness and enthusiasm of to-day, and they carry these stabilizing influences with them wherever they may go.

Some recent studies under the direction of Dr. C. J. Galpin of the United States Department of Agriculture have shown very definitely how wide an influence a very small group of farm people may have upon the life of the nation as a whole. In the course of ninety years the little farming community of Belleville, N. Y., sent out its young people to thirty-two other States, to Alaska and Panama and to several foreign countries—2,445 migrants in all, the number varying year by year according to the economic status of agriculture in the nation. It was shown that these farm folks had had a direct influence upon four hundred and thirty-eight communities in which they had settled, many of them becoming leaders in the life of the great cities. The names of those who succeeded in work of national importance form a long and impressive list. There is Daniel Burnham, the architect, who has designed buildings for twenty-three cities in the United States and in London and Rome; Dr. Samuel Guthrie, the discoverer of chloroform; Charles N. Crittenton, philanthropist, whose rescue missions for girls have encircled the globe; Marietta Holley of "Samantha Allen" fame; and the brilliant, though unorthodox, Robert G. Ingersoll. Others are editors, orators, soldiers, judges of the state supreme court, United States Senators, founders of schools, and manufacturers, each with a wide influence upon the national life. Yet the little commun-

ity has always kept at home a sturdy race of farmers who have advanced its standards in succeeding generations.

Another little farm community among the hills of West Virginia, though having a radius of only two and a half miles, has sent out its young people to thirty-three States and to several foreign countries. Local records show that in three or four generations this little group has furnished two hundred and three school teachers, among them several university professors and a university president; twenty-nine music teachers; three noted natural scientists; fifteen ministers, one of them a widely known evangelist; six missionaries to foreign countries; twenty physicians; five dentists; three pharmacists; three optometrists; forty district, county and state officers, one of them a governor of the State; and seventeen commissioned army officers. At least one hundred and forty-three other communities have felt directly the influence of this hill-country neighborhood. And yet there are those who think that a farm is of little account except for the food it supplies to the cities!

These two communities are not at all unusual. They are but average examples of our American country districts, where every farm home is a seed-bed in which young folks are growing up until they are of an age to be transplanted to the cities and other communities.

Few people understand this steady flow of the young from the farms of the country. It is a very necessary movement. The American farm usually consists of only so much land as can be managed efficiently by one man

with the help of hired labor and machinery, though the actual number of acres varies greatly with the kind of farming. Because of the development of machinery the profitable unit of farm land in this country tends to become larger rather than smaller under most conditions. If one of the sons wishes to become a farmer he can, of course, assume control of the home place. But if another son wishes to farm, another plot of land must be found for him and for other farmers in the family. If the home lies in a good agricultural section, it is probable that a sufficient body of land cannot be secured, so the young people are forced out to other communities where land is more readily available, or to the city for a livelihood. Were all to remain on the home farm it would be divided into such small units that profitable farming would be impossible.

Thus it is both necessary and desirable that perhaps two out of three of the young people of the farm home go elsewhere to seek their fortunes. There is no dangerous depletion of the farm community so long as enough intelligent and vigorous young people are left to till the farms and manage the neighborhood affairs. The real danger lies in a general exodus of whole families such as occurs in periods of disproportion between the proceeds of farming and the proceeds of other industries, like that immediately following the World War. In many sections large tracts of land were almost depopulated by the call of the cities, and in all probability it will be many years before stable homes of the best American type will be reëstablished in those places.

The story of Russia has demonstrated very clearly that no nation can live by cities alone. However much enlightenment and culture and wealth may prevail in the crowded centers, they can never hold out in a democracy against the destructive forces of ignorance and anarchy surging up from the wide country places. So the farm home is not a local problem; it is a national problem of large proportions. As the farm life studies have shown, every little hill-country community is affecting for better or worse many widely separated centers, many of them in the great cities of the land. It is easy to understand the influence these young people of the farms, well-grounded as they are in the fundamental principles and traditions of Americanism, have had in the Americanization of the hordes of foreign immigrants. Factory managers say that very often it is the farm boy or girl who, working shoulder to shoulder with the low-class Hungarian and the Russian peasant, speaks for law and order and for the true democracy of America which recognizes the rights of the rich as well as the rights of the poor. The farmer's children know the difficulties of the property owner far too well to countenance any acts of sabotage or wanton destruction. They are often the saving factor in our difficult problem of the American melting pot.

A nation can make real progress only when all the people, city and country, unite in the forward movement. This is the reason why our American culture and enlightenment must reach to the farthest farmhouse in the land if our nation is to be really safe for democracy. Just now, because of the recent depression in

the price of agricultural products, hundreds of farm communities are having a hard struggle to maintain their standards of living. Even the best agricultural districts find the most necessary community projects beyond their reach and they need encouragement and assistance. Scattered communities must provide elementary and secondary schools so that the children need not be sent to the city to get an education. Adequate hospital service, dispensaries and visiting nurses are just as necessary to the maintenance of health in the country as in the city. Every possible development needs to be made for adequate light and power and means of transportation for every farm family. And none of these things are mere local issues. The nation as a whole must watch over the rural communities and take thought for their welfare, just as a great municipal government takes thought for the welfare of all its suburbs because, neglected, they affect the condition of the whole municipality.

But this does not mean either philanthropy or governmental assistance. What the farm people need is not outside interference with their plans but a real understanding of their difficulties and a real coöperation in their efforts to improve their conditions. Capital from the cities might well be invested in rural community projects, however, and long-time loans upon farmhouse conveniences should be the rule rather than the exception. Working capital is the great need, for in the country districts most of the local wealth is of necessity tied up in the land they cultivate. Yet it is only by community projects requiring much capital that in

the future the American families can be maintained upon the farms from generation to generation.

In payment for this interest shown by the city people the farm will return not only its corn and hogs and cattle, but also a steady stream of bright-eyed young people to carry the best American traditions into every city in the land. As the farmer himself will tell you jokingly, his young folks are indeed the "best crop" of his farm. And so, as I look back once more upon the little girl in the blue gingham dress who swung upon the gate to watch the roaring trains go by, I realize that every country child in every farm home is indeed of importance to the people of the nation.

The Activities of the Farm Home

In the big and important business of farm and home the farmer and his wife are equal partners. He is the director of the general farming operations, and she of the home operations, and each acts in an advisory capacity to the other. They are equally necessary to good country living. As every country person knows, good farming alone can never produce a pleasant country life, in fact, certain kinds of good farming can make it most unpleasant. And good home-making alone can never make a happy family if the farm is run down, the products poorly marketed and the family feels the slackness of inefficiency and the pinch of poverty. So any real improvement in country life conditions must always come about by improving both the farm methods and the home methods and keeping them in their proper relation to each other.

To the woman on the farm, the home is the index of the success or failure of the whole farming business. The farmer himself may become unduly interested in "growing more corn to feed more hogs to buy more land to grow more corn to feed more hogs—" but the woman on the farm never does. Her mind runs straight to the heart of the human problem of making the proceeds of the farm provide for the happiness and well-being of every person in her household. It is not so much the money that she thinks about as what it will add to the quality of life that her family is leading, in helping to keep their minds and imaginations as well as their bodies properly fed, to make them enjoy life with a real enthusiasm, and to be capable of high thinking and noble resolving. And she loves the broad acres of the farm chiefly because they are the means to the end of providing a high quality of life for the farm family.

She sees clearly how much of human value is lost by short-sighted economic methods like that, for instance, of plowing up the dooryard to plant corn, or in other ways damaging the home business for the sake of the farm business. I remember that my Kentucky grandmother used to shake her head sadly when she heard of such doings. "It's a great sin," she would say, from the wisdom of her eighty years of experience, "and people who do such things never get on." Some people think that if a farmer has a good income he will live well, but the women of the country know that this is not always true. Unless the proper relation of home and farm is kept, the money may be used only to

expand the farm operations or to bring in interest for some future purpose instead of brightening the daily living of the family.

Several very earnest farm women have written me about what they call the "when we move to town" idea, which causes the country parents to save up everything for that future prosperous period, and by implying that "anything is good enough for the country," give their children a contempt for country life. These women believe in living cultured, happy lives in pleasant, comfortable homes every day and not putting off all the good things until they are too old to enjoy them. "A woman who does not give her home in the country as much thought as she would give it in the city," one of them says, "is just inviting her girls to go to town. My girls have stayed with me because we have made home pleasant for them." And they say that it is the place of the woman of the farm to stand out against the temptation to put every cent back into the farm investment, if by that the children are cheated of their chance for development at the time when they most need it. They had better do without many things in after life than do without the training which would fit them for a high position.

It is the spirit of the home that counts more than anything else. Some people do not "live poor" even in the greatest poverty, and others live poor always, even though they have the best of everything. So if the country family hopes to live well some day, it must begin by living well now, and make the home a place of culture, gentle manners, and of a wide interest in the

world's affairs, even if the furnishings are poor. Then if the day ever comes when the family has the money to buy the luxuries of life it will be entirely at home with them. But if the family begins by living poor to the extent of giving up all the little courtesies, its members can never feel quite at ease in the different atmosphere.

The real happiness of a home often has little to do with the physical comforts or equipment. It is a matter of the spirit rather than of the body, and its presence is to be felt rather than seen. It springs largely from a sense of justice and mutual understanding among the members of the family, and the coöperation which leads each one to work for the good of all. It is a little community in which every one, from the head of the house to the baby, is allowed to have his own personality and his likes and dislikes and his share in the good things of the home, and yet is expected to perform his proper service to the happiness and well-being of those around him, and when necessary to sacrifice his own desires to the general good. It is this sense of responsibility, resting upon each member, which makes the farm home such an excellent training school for children. Each child learns to work without thought of personal reward, and to execute from day to day his small tasks as faithfully as if they were great ones.

Because of its isolation from the outside world the farm home can be, if not everything, at least many things to all its members. It is a little fortress of the family among the fields. It gives the country family a sense of solidarity which no city family can possibly have. Family traditions are passed down by word of

mouth, family traits are emphasized and intensified, and the personality of every child is molded by the family heritage. That this characteristic of the country home has some dangers no one can doubt—it sometimes leads to the development of misanthropes and other unsocial characters, but at any rate it always leads to definite ideas and ideals of life, and an intensity of character and a straightness of vision which are almost an impossibility among the promiscuous influences surrounding the city child. And the wise country mother tries to bring about the development in each child of the best of the family inheritance, but modified by a wide tolerance for different characteristics as they appear in others.

In the home business the farm woman looks out for the material needs of her family. She is interested primarily in the problems of consumption, just as her husband is interested primarily in the problems of production. She conserves and makes use of the farm products or the money brought in by the farm business. Otherwise, as the country people say, she would "throw out with a teaspoon more than he could bring in with a shovel." And the use of farm products for the best good of the farm family is not an easy nor a simple task, either mentally or physically. The efficient farm woman needs to know, as the Cornell Reading Course points out, "The relation of germ life to disease, of cleanliness to health and well-being; the physiological needs of the body for fresh air, clean water, wholesome food, sunshine, exercise and rest; the management of the income in the buying of food, shelter and clothing; the principles of art as they

apply to the artistic arrangement of furnishings and wearing apparel; the characteristics and values of fabrics and how to distinguish those goods which are genuine from those that are not; the relation of consumer to producer and of employer to employee; the needs of the house as a workshop wherein the time and energy of the worker have a market value; the maintenance of proper standards of living as indicated by wise expenditures.'' All this in addition to the preparation of foods and preserving them for winter. It is true she cannot bring about good conditions in the home without the cooperation of her husband, but these are her special fields for study and she must usually be the leader in seeking them for the home.

But these scientific housekeeping tasks are not the end of her labors. She must also be the home-maker, and this means much in the isolated country home. Miss Florence E. Ward of the Department of Agriculture says of the farm women:

Women realize that no amount of scientific arrangement or labor-saving appliances will of themselves make a home. It is the woman's personal presence, influence, and care that make the home. Housekeeping is a business as practical as farming and with no romance in it; home-making is a sacred trust. A woman wants time salvaged from housekeeping to create the right home atmosphere for her children and to so enrich their home surroundings that they may gain their ideals of beauty and their tastes for books and music not from the shop windows, the movies, the billboards, or the jazz band, but from the home environment.

The farm woman knows that there is no one who can take

her place as teacher and companion of her children during their early impressionable years and she craves more time for their care. She feels the need of making the farm home an inviting place for the young people of the family and their friends and of promoting the recreational and educational advantages of the neighborhood in order to cope with the various forms of city allurements. She realizes that modern conditions call for an even deeper realization and contact between mother and child. The familiar term, "God could not be everywhere so He made mothers" has its modern scientific application, as no amount of education and care given to children in school or elsewhere outside the home can take the place of mothering in the home.

The efficient home-maker takes time to play with her children as well as to work for them—it is one of the most sacred duties of the mother. She passes on to them all the golden treasury of nursery rhymes, song and story, that is every child's rightful heritage, and the precious chronicles of family life, the stories of "when I was a little girl," of grandfather and grandmother and the great grandparents, of heroic uncles and beautiful aunts, of the family seat in the "old country," and all the other lore of the family living. Around the open fire in the evening she takes part in the good old country pleasures of popping corn, roasting the red-cheeked apples on the grate, roasting potatoes and chestnuts in the ashes, and reading the pictures in the glowing coals in terms of high adventure and romance.

It is interesting to know that many of the games and rhymes in which country children delight—like London

Bridge, Old Mother Witch, Drop the Handkerchief, Blind Man's Buff, Jacks or Knuckle-Bones, and many of the ball games—have come down from mother to children from so long ago that even history cannot record their beginning. The old-time singing games and counting out games are also as much a part of a child's education as anything he learns in school; and he should certainly learn every one of those which are common in that locality or are a part of the family background.

Simple dramatic work will feed the children's imagination more than anything else. They love to act out the stories they read or hear until they actually live them vividly and heartily. Robinson Crusoe tramps the shore and watches for a sail in many a country sitting-room, bold bandits set off in rocking-chair boats to sail the Spanish main, and Indians and pioneers struggle for supremacy in the dark forest of the dining-room chairs. And it is safe to say that no child ever entirely forgets a story which he has thus entered into in his play. Some families deliberately develop this ability by a fireside game called "Who Am I?" Each child in turn tries to impersonate some one, either a real person or a character in a book, and the others guess who it is. If the acting is so poor they can not guess, then he loses his next turn. Thus the children learn to be more observant of book characters and people, even of animals and birds if these are added to the play, and to express them in action. As the children grow older, they can turn the home into a little theater in which all the family and friends take part in staging plays from their favorite books and stories, and ransack the attic

and closets for costumes and properties. Of course this does not lead to very orderly housekeeping in the farm home, but as a country woman writes, "there are lots of things more important in life than just good housekeeping."

"Show me the home wherein music dwells," said Longfellow, "and I will show you a happy, peaceful and contented home." And indeed this is true. Some of my pleasantest memories are of an American family of Welsh parentage in which every member was expected to add, with voice or instrument, to the family harmony. Whether the music is classical or popular, or the fine old ballads of the mountaineers, it is a form of expression which children instinctively love, and the wise mother makes the most of their interest for wholesome and satisfying good times in the farm home. Even if the family cannot afford a piano, singing is always possible, and a flute, violin or guitar costs very little. In fact, all that is needed is a real desire for music and the family will find some way to make the evenings melodious and pleasant. There is another reason, too, for family music, in that the country neighborhood is always in need of musical leadership. High places in the Grange and church and other community organizations are always ready for the person who knows how to sing or play or to lead others in musical expression.

In fact, in many ways the country home must always do a great deal of "lifting on its own boot-straps" because of the inefficiency of some of the country life institutions. In districts where the country church

fails, the home must provide religious instruction and worship. If the country school does not teach, the home must. And if the local social organizations do not provide the sort of happy and hearty recreation and entertainment which the children need, then the home again must become a social center in which the children of the family and their friends can hold high revel in all the normal fun of childhood. It is as much the function of the home as that of feeding the mouths and sheltering the heads of the farm family.

For the farm home is a real institution, and a most complicated and important one. It has a three-fold mission to perform, and its efficiency must be judged according to the measure in which it develops each phase of its work in harmony with the others. First of all, its purpose is to furnish the farmer and his wife with a place for happiness, comfort and personal development. The man has his own life to live and the woman has her own life to live and they seek the home life to realize themselves, as men and women have done in all ages. And each must have the opportunity to work out a satisfying life according to his own bent. The second purpose of the home is as a place for children. For years in the home life most of the activities will revolve around the children and be governed very largely by their needs. Their care while little, their education and training and recreation, and finally their settling in some lifework and in homes of their own are important periods of the life of the family. And for the third purpose, the farm home must always take its part in making the farm

business a profitable venture. It is true that in some instances too much of the work of the farm takes place in the home, and this is very undesirable, but the home and the farm can never be entirely divorced as are the city home and the city man's business. It must have a hand in building up the farm. And the farm business there transacted and the training given will always make a great deal of difference in the final success or failure of every agricultural undertaking.

CHAPTER III

THE FARMHOUSE

THE farmhouse, its convenience and comfort, plays such a large part in the happiness of the farm family that the building of a new home should never be undertaken without a careful study of every part of the problem of fitting it to the farm needs and the needs of the family. The College of Agriculture of your State is glad to give expert assistance in the laying out of the farmstead, locating the farm home and building the best type of house to serve all purposes. Some States have published in bulletin form architects' plans for farm homes. The State Board of Health will give valuable suggestions about the situation of the house from a health point of view. And the United States Department of Agriculture has many excellent bulletins on the subject of the well-planned, well-built, well-equipped country home.

That it is unwise for the farmer to depend upon his own ideas of building or upon those of the local carpenters or masons is shown by the numerous inconvenient, poorly-planned farmhouses the country over, which take toll of the housewife's energy every day from generation to generation. Yet the mere fact that an architect is secured to draw the plans for the house by no

means insures a convenient country home. Most of the architects know only city or suburban conditions and they sometimes seem loath to adapt their plans to the making of a truly livable country house. They cannot even be depended upon to take into account that the general style of the house should fit into the scenery about it. Otherwise we should not have the many absurd, narrow, citified farm houses—which look as if they had strayed out from town and got lost—that one sees in some parts of the country. I know of several such country homes, three or four stories in height, of which the weary housewife would gladly exchange at least a whole story for the convenience of one more bedroom on the ground floor. Either the architect was at fault or someone chose the plans most unwisely, and the resulting mistake is almost impossible to rectify.

The whole plan of the country home should be different from that of the city home. In the city home nearly all the activities of the family lead them in and out of the front door. So everything is properly arranged with reference to convenience to the front entrance. But in the country home the family activities for the most part lead them in and out of the side door or a rear door toward the barns and stables and gardens and chicken-yard. For this reason, the side or rear door must be considered the real entrance and the rest of the house planned with that in mind. If possible, it should lead into a small entry way with doors opening into the farm office, the wash room and the family sitting-room. And because of the fact that the housekeeper must spend much of her time in the kitchen, the stairway should

be in the rear of the house instead of in the front, to save a great deal of extra walking in the trips up-stairs. And all doors should be so placed as to give the most convenient passage from the side or the rear.

The country kitchen must usually be larger than that provided for the city or suburban home. When one country woman was asked about new plans for a house she said, "I want to be sure about one thing, and that is to have room in the kitchen for the calf." And it is true that there should be room enough for the calf and the pet lamb, and even a basket of early hatched chickens in an emergency, but there should be no waste space. It is also convenient to include a cozy and comfortable "breakfast nook" in which the family can have their meals, especially in the winter time. The kitchen sink should be near a window with a good view, and proper space should be allowed for the oil stove as well as for the range, and for a dumb-waiter to carry food to the cellar. And because the room is large the apparatus for different kinds of work should be grouped with great care so that any cooking operation can be carried on without a great deal of walking. Some farm women like the kitchen in the front of the house so that they can see the people passing on the road while they are working, and have time to take off the soiled work apron when they see some visitor coming. Many of the homes in England are arranged in this way, and if the farm buildings are at the side, and the farmhouse is not too near the dusty road, it can be made most convenient. It is often only a rather senseless tradition, which keeps

the housekeeper cooped up in the rear of the house away from everything that is going on.

The farm dining-room may open with glassed doors or wide windows toward the gardens or the orchard. It need not be large, especially if there is a wide opening with double doors between it and the living-room. Throwing the two rooms together will give a large space for the long tables necessary for occasional big company meals and for the threshing and harvesting crews, as well as for community get-together meetings of various kinds. In many country families the dining-room is used for the family sitting-room in winter, the meals being served in the kitchen breakfast nook. This saves the other sitting-room from the wear and tear of the children's play, so that it is always ready for visitors. "The comic papers poke fun at farmers' wives for keeping parlors or living rooms in which to entertain guests," a farm woman says. "But city folks haven't the least idea how dirty the farm sitting-room can get a day or two after it is cleaned. The men's clothes are covered with chaff, dust and dirt of every sort, not to mention the odors of fertilizer, manure and so on. The children have no spick and span sidewalks to play on, so their shoes are generally all gummed with mud. Do you wonder we want to keep one room, at least, where we will not be ashamed to entertain a casual guest?"

The farm office is a new addition, but a very necessary one. The modern farmer must be a thorough business man if he is to succeed and, like any other business man, he needs a convenient office for his desk and account

books, and for all the bulletins, catalogs, and other literature relating to his daily work. It should be so placed that the farmer can bring in the hired men to talk over their accounts and other farm matters without going through the kitchen or the family living-room. And there he can retire for thought or reading, away from the hubbub of the family life, and spread out the papers for his farm inventory, or his drainage blueprints, where they will be safe from baby fingers.

The farm washroom is another great convenience. It should have running water and plenty of coat-hooks. The men come there and wash up before going in to meals, leaving their muddy boots, wet coats, and chaff-covered overalls, so that a great deal of dirt and disorder is kept out of the dining-room. In some farm homes the washroom serves as a laundry also, as farm women generally prefer the laundry on the ground floor rather than in the basement.

One downstairs bedroom is almost a necessity in the farm home, and two are even better. The country housekeeper gets exercise enough in the run of the day's work without the many trips up and down stairs. And in case of sickness, the patient can be put in the downstairs room, close to the worker in the kitchen. If possible, there should be an open fireplace in the living-room and in the bedroom, even if the house is heated with a furnace, as the open fireplace provides good ventilation, is cheerful, and most useful in the cool days of spring and fall when the furnace is not in use. There should also be a downstairs bathroom. If there is no water system, this bathroom may be fitted with a small

hand pump for cold water, and hot water can be carried from the kitchen range which is but a few steps away. A chemical closet can be installed also. The farmer's wife will find the first floor bath and toilet most helpful; it will save her many steps, especially if she is the mother of small children. And she spends so much of her time in and about the kitchen, that she should have every comfort and convenience close to that part of the house.

When a new house is built, even if funds are not available for installing a water system, a heating system and an electric light system at the time, it should always be planned with that in view, for as the farm income expands, as it almost certain to do in the next few years, the family will want all the new improvements in their home. For saving in plumbing, the upstairs bathroom should be located directly over the kitchen, and the downstairs bathroom next to it. Another convenience which should be planned for, if not built at once, is a large well-screened back porch where the housewife can prepare fruit or vegetables and do other work in the open air; also a balcony or sleeping-porch upstairs where she can shake the rugs and air the bedding without taking them downstairs.

But the new farmhouse is the exception rather than the rule in America to-day. The usual problem is that of adapting an old building, solidly constructed, perhaps, but put up by main strength and awkwardness rather than by careful planning, to fit the needs of the farm and the family. And with all our new ideas of heating and lighting and water supply and sewage dis-

posal to be incorporated in a clumsy old building, the problem is by no means an easy one. Yet many farm families have taken a real joy in making over an old farmhouse little by little until it has all the modern conveniences and makes a really pleasant home for the family—all the more pleasant because of its mellow old age and traditions. Some of the bulletins issued by the agricultural colleges give much attention to the remodeling of old farm homes into convenient dwellings for the modern family.

Very often the inconveniences of an old house are as much in little things as in big ones. A door opens awkwardly the wrong way, the sink in the kitchen is in a dark corner, exits and entrances must be made at inconvenient places, and the rooms are too large or too small for their purposes. Sometimes the cutting of an extra window or two, into which window frames bought from a mail-order house can be set by the farmer himself, will change the whole outlook for the home worker. A new door may save hundreds of steps each day. And a woodbox which can be filled from the outside will save much dirt and litter. A pass-cabinet between the dining room and kitchen will sometimes greatly assist in the convenience of serving and clearing away the meals. And a pipe to carry off waste water from the kitchen will save much heavy lifting. If all the family are called upon for their ideas of efficiency in the home and then for assistance in carrying them out in a practical way, the changes can be made very quickly.

The problem should be attacked at once, and vigorously. It is a great mistake to put off making changes

because one does not have the money to do everything at once. The way to begin to improve a kitchen is to begin and then keep at it, until finally it is made over into a convenient workshop. One of the first things to change is the height of the work tables and sink. For some reason, every old table I ever knew was made too low for the worker so that it is little wonder that stooped shoulders were so common among housekeepers in the past. Tables can be raised by fitting them with casters, by fastening blocks of wood to the legs with metal strips, or by taking off the table top and building up underneath it. The following table indicates the proper height of the work table, or the bottom of the kitchen sink, in proportion to the height of the worker:

HEIGHT OF WORKER	HEIGHT OF TABLE
4 feet 10 inches	27 inches
5 feet	28 inches
5 feet 2 inches	29 inches
5 feet 4 inches	30 inches
5 feet 6 inches	31 inches

If a child assists with the kitchen work, she can use a low, well-built step or platform on which to stand when working.

Sometimes a big, inconvenient kitchen can be made much more useful by cutting off a part of it for a washroom and laundry or for the farm office, then rearranging the kitchen furniture for the greatest convenience. If possible, there should be opposite windows in the kitchen so that a cross draft will carry out unpleasant odors and make the room cool in summer. But

the cross draft must not, of course, blow across either the wood range or the oil stove or it will interfere with the cooking. All the furniture and utensils should be grouped with a view to saving steps in the different operations which take place in the kitchen. In figuring distances, a pedometer is helpful, or the counting of the steps one takes in getting a meal or mixing a cake. As it takes about 2,600 steps to make a mile, one can even figure out how many steps she takes in the course of a year.

Very often the number of steps can be cut almost in half by a re-arrangement of work tables and of utensils. A good grouping of the smaller utensils is as follows: Near sink or table—dish pan, dish drainer, scouring materials; to hang behind sink or table—soap shaker, paring knives, dish mop, plate scraper, pot scraper; in cabinet or near work table—measuring cups, mixing spoons, knives, measuring spoons, spatula, egg beater, forks, pie tins, rolling pin, sauce pans, containers for flour, sugar, salt, and spices; by the stove—pot lids, potato masher, basting spoon, salt, pepper, and flour for gravies. Even the duplication of salt and pepper and flour on a little shelf near the stove will save a number of steps in preparing meals. If there is an oil stove, also, these should be duplicated again on its own shelf and matches should be kept in reach of each stove. The kitchen clock—and there should always be a kitchen clock—is placed where it can be seen from the work table and the sink. And every utensil which is used but a few times a year should be put away safely on an upper shelf, where it will not be in the way of the ordi-

nary operations. It should never be allowed to occupy space needed for utensils used frequently.

Some of the larger pieces of equipment besides the stoves, sink and work tables which are mentioned by the farm women as being most useful are a kitchen cabinet, either bought or built in, a dumb-waiter to carry food to the cellar, a fireless cooker set on a bench or stand, a wheel tray to carry food and dishes back and forth to the dining room, a refrigerator or ice-box, and a high stool on which to sit when working. Others are also mentioned, but these seem to be considered essential to a good farm kitchen.

Since it is very easy in housework to "get in a rut" and fail to see a way out of a bad arrangement, some country communities have found it helpful to have a general kitchen-improvement campaign. Sometimes this work is led by the home demonstration agent, sometimes by the Grange or some other local group. The men and women meet and talk over the problems of a convenient kitchen, using government bulletins or books on home-making for suggestions. Then each tries to make the greatest improvement possible in the home kitchen. As new pieces of equipment are secured, visits are made back and forth and the women compare notes on the different makes of oil stoves, lamps, fireless cookers, etc. In this way, they get suggestions from others' kitchens which can be carried out in their own. Sometimes they have a contest and outside judges are elected to decide upon the most convenient kitchen and the most beautiful kitchen in the group, and small prizes are given the winners. Of course in judging the results

the amount of money expended in equipment is always taken into account, so that the cleverly arranged kitchen of the poorest person in the group sometimes wins the prize.

Of the larger and more expensive alterations to the farm home, the women place a water system and sewerage system first of all. The problems of cleanliness are so serious and the weight of water which must be carried in and out so great that the installation of a good water system cuts the work more than anything else. With plenty of hot and cold water at hand, the preparing of vegetables, the washing of milk things, the weekly laundry and many of the other hardest tasks of the home are greatly lightened. There are excellent Department of Agriculture bulletins on the farm water supply and sewerage. The Ohio, Kansas, Missouri and New York Colleges of Agriculture, and perhaps the colleges in other states, have made special studies of the local problems in providing running water in the home, and some of the manufacturers of water systems put out very helpful booklets. So that if even a little money is available, the woman on the farm, by studying the question carefully, can find good plans for an efficient system in her own home.

Next in importance in the saving of work is the home heating plant, to save the carrying in of coal and wood and the carrying out of ashes during the winter months. The pipeless furnace has long been a favorite in the farm home, and is often the only kind of furnace possible in a poorly constructed old house. New houses should, if possible, have the furnace built in, or the

house so planned that a furnace can be installed later. Electricity for lighting and power has come to many farm homes in the past few years in the home electric plant. Some farm families that I know gave up the automobiles they had thought of buying and spent the money on water systems and electric light plants. The small gasoline engine which runs the electric light plant can be managed by the woman herself and the power can be used for the electric iron, the vacuum cleaner, and other electrical appliances. And the electric lights do much to make the home bright and attractive and to make the evening chores more pleasant. Though these improvements cost considerable money in the beginning, the farm women say they sometimes save money in the long run because they release the woman's time and energy from some of the heaviest tasks, so that she need not hire extra help, or can turn her attention to other tasks which are more profitable. In any case, such improvements give the housekeeper that free time which she so deeply desires for the making of a real home for the farm family.

Interior Decoration

The task which every true woman loves best of all is that of making a comfortable and beautiful home for her family. And the beauty of the home is of utmost importance because there the spirit of the family, as a family, is shown forth so plainly that even the stranger who comes to the door can learn it by his first glance around. And the children are continually, though unconsciously, influenced by the harmony of their sur-

roundings. The kind of furnishings, the wealth of the family, have something to do with the impression which the home gives, but we all know that a happy household will somehow find means to make the home pleasant-looking even if there is little money. I remember when I was a child I often visited some people of French extraction. They had little money, and they had bought their rugs and other furnishings at the local store, yet even a child could feel that their house had an "air" and a dignity far above those of the neighbors. The difference perhaps was in the simplicity of the furnishings, the arrangement, and the spotless cleanliness of everything about the house.

The farm woman may feel that her ideas of beauty are rather vague, especially if she seldom sees the inside of the homes of others and has no books on the subject of home decoration. She may not understand just how to apply to her own conditions the good suggestions which appear in the magazines from time to time. She knows, however, that she likes certain things and dislikes others. And she knows that she enjoys the atmosphere of Mrs. Brown's home while she feels there is something wrong with Mrs. Green's. But sometimes because she does not know exactly how to make her own home right instead of wrong, she gives up the idea of beauty altogether, feeling that so long as the furnishings are comfortable she ought to be thankful, even though they are not altogether pleasing to the eye.

Yet many of the simplest and least pretentious of our farm homes carry out the principles of interior dec-

oration to give harmony and beauty. The usual defect is that the home-maker has no real plan for her house as a whole. One room is improved at a time, or one piece of furniture bought at a time according to the idea of the moment, and without any relation to its harmony with the rest of the house, and the result is such a jumble of furnishings that the house is neither beautiful nor restful. It is true that one can seldom do over the whole house or shift all the furniture at once. She must do a little here and a little there, and use the rugs, carpets and curtains until they are worn out. But if she decides definitely upon how she wants the house to look and then works toward it with every change she makes, she can in time secure a good effect in the whole house. For the decoration of a home is like the painting of a picture, everything in it must "belong" with the rest if one is to take pleasure in looking at it. It does not matter if many of the things are old if they fit into the picture properly, in fact, soft-toned old furniture and well-worn rugs are much easier to make into a pleasing whole than are the brighter new ones.

One of the simplest methods of making the rooms of a house look as if they belonged together is to have all the woodwork in the same color. It is also, of course, an economy in buying the paint or stain. I remember one charming country home in which all the woodwork was in white, except the doors, stair-treads and banisters, which were mahogany. And all the walls were gray—a two-toned leafy forest paper in the hall and living room, a plain oatmeal paper in the dining-room,

and dull-finished gray enamel paint in the kitchen. The hall rug was gray and tan and red, the living-room rug was gray with a darker border, the room brightened with splashes of orange and blue in lampshades and cushions. The dining-room rug was in soft oriental reds and blues. Upstairs the daughter's bedroom had a satin-striped gray paper on the walls, with a tiny border of rose and blue, the cretonne window hangings and the bed covering were gay with rose and blue flowers, and the rose-colored lampshades were bound in blue. In the boy's room the walls were covered with warm gray burlap, and the plain hangings were the same, bordered with red to match the shade of the numerous pennants of his college, with which he had decorated the walls. The whole effect was pleasing and not in the least tiresome, though the whole house was done in the same colors. My only objection to it was that in bleak winter days the gray tones were a bit cold-looking—but this could have been relieved by warm-colored thin silk hangings at the windows.

For most farmhouses I should prefer a warmer coloring, perhaps a deep cream or ivory or a putty color instead of the gray. If the woodwork is of a fine wood, the old finish can be removed with a varnish remover and the wood stained a soft brown or gray. Then it can be finished with wax or a good furniture varnish.

Floors

The floor is the basis of any scheme of decoration and it is usually the despair of the country housekeeper, as she knows from sad experience it is almost impossible

to keep the floors in good condition in the country home because of the continual tramping of heavy boots and shoes, laden with mud from the fields. For the past few years finished floors with rather large rugs have been considered most desirable, but if an electric vacuum sweeper can be used regularly, carpets are still possible from a sanitary point of view. For most houses the polished floors and rugs are undoubtedly the best. Some people think that carpets are warmer because they keep the drafts from the floor, but a neat molding fitted snugly against the floor along the baseboard, and small rugs in front of the doors will effectually shut off the floor drafts even in old houses.

If the floor has been painted it can be cleaned with paint remover or lye and the boards scraped and sandpapered until the wood is clean. Old floors with the wood darkened by the years will need very little stain. My own experience has been that light oak or a very light gray stain will color them quite enough for a medium brown or gray. Floors should not be made too dark, because the dust and lint show plainly on a dark floor, and they tend to become darker with age and use. After the floor has been stained, a little of the stain is mixed with crack-filler and the cracks filled, then the whole floor rubbed with a wood filler before the varnish or wax is applied. The proper finishing of floors takes much patience and hard work but the result is satisfactory. Several years ago I treated the hard pine floors of our own seventy-five-year-old farmhouse in this way and they still have a good finish in spite of the hard wear.

Some experts advise the use of a ground coat of light paint over an old floor, before applying the stain and varnish, but personally I do not like the hard glassy effect thus produced, and the light undercoat will soon show through at every scratch. Even if the floor is considerably discolored or streaked the shadows from the furniture will usually hide most of its faults. And if a new board must be set in, it can be tinted to match the surrounding boards with a little dull brown stain or gray and brown stain mixed. In fact, I have never seen a floor so bad that I thought it would be improved by a coat of light paint under the varnish. A waxed surface is always beautiful, but it requires some work to keep it in condition, especially if snow and water are brought in upon it. It has the advantage, however, that a worn spot can be done over at any time by adding more wax and polishing it. Varnish is easier to keep in order but the worn spots cannot be renewed as often as one could wish.

The rug should always be chosen carefully because it is the ground work of the whole scheme of decoration. It represents the ground in nature's picture out of doors, just as the walls represent the scenery and the ceiling the sky. So, taking a hint from nature, the floor should always be darkest and dullest, the walls lighter, and the ceiling lightest of all—to give an airy effect to the room. For rugs, the wood browns and grays and dull greens are always popular, either in plain colors or finely figured designs with touches of dull mahogany reds, old blue or tan. Such floor coverings do not attract attention to themselves but form a

fitting background for the other furnishings of the room. Plain velvet rugs with a darker toned border are pretty but they show dirt and footprints, so that many people prefer a small inconspicuous pattern for rooms where there is much hard wear.

As to the kinds of rugs, the heaviest Smyrnas or heavy Wilton velvets best stand the hard wear under farm conditions, and they come in excellent colors and patterns, but they are expensive. Of the moderate priced rugs, tapestry Brussels in small designs, plain-color linen rugs, and heavy grass rugs give the best service. Old carpets can be woven into very satisfactory rugs also. For the upstairs rooms, there are inexpensive mixed wool and fiber rugs which are most attractive, though they do not wear so well as the linen or the all-wool Scotch woven rugs. Plain China matting is also good on the upstairs rooms, and the hand-woven rugs of various kinds.

For the entry from the stables, the wash room, the farm office and the kitchen, the floors may be finished with a coat of raw linseed oil renewed every six months. Or they can be covered with linoleum laid over a paper foundation and finished with a coat of waterproof varnish. The whole question of the finish of floors and the kind of rugs used is most important to the housekeeper because the constant hard wear in the farm home is disastrous to shoddy floor furnishings.

A General Plan

Let us suppose, then, that the floors of the farmhouse have been stained a soft brown, and the woodwork has

been painted a putty color or ivory with a finish of enamel. The living-room rug is brown with tan and dark red and blue in the figures. Since the rug is figured the wallpaper and draperies need to be rather plain. So the wallpaper is dull buff with a self-toned figure, the ceiling a light cream color, and the curtains are of heavy cream net, perhaps with overhangings of tan or dull red. No border is used with the wallpaper, though there may be a wood strip painted to match the woodwork, where the wall and ceiling meet. Over the fireplace is a good reproduction in color of a Madonna or a lovely landscape glowing in reds and browns and blues. The big family lamp has a simple parchment shade which gives a clear yellow light to read by. The extra cushions are in dark red velour or velveteen, as they must stand much hard wear, and a strip of the same material bound with dull gold braid is on the reading table.

If new furniture is to be bought for the country living-room, nothing is better than the hand-made Mission furniture which is now, because the fad for it has waned somewhat, selling at greatly reduced prices in the city stores. It will always be in good taste because it is simple and structurally honest and has real dignity. If it is not too heavy, it is very satisfactory and stands the hardest wear. In buying furniture it is always better to buy a good quality with simple lines. If little money is available and the whole house must be furnished at once, many people find it better to buy a few good pieces and use very cheap furniture for the rest. Then as the family income warrants it, the very

cheap furniture can be replaced by something better. For instance, the country dining-room can be furnished temporarily with a kitchen table and plain wood chairs and a cheap cupboard, all painted in some pleasing color. And later when handsomer furnishings can be bought, these pieces will be found useful for the kitchen, the porches, or the bedrooms.

In the best bedroom the woodwork is in cream color with a deeper shade of satin-striped paper on the walls. The over-draperies of the windows, the chair cushions, and the bedspread are a bright cretonne with a cream background and a design of rose-color blossoms with touches of blue—the note of blue emphasized in the room by a vivid blue cushion or a simple blue vase for flowers. Other bedrooms can be developed similarly with different cretonnes or pretty ginghams to give the color note. The great advantage in adding the bright color by means of curtains, lamp shades, cushions, etc., is that if the color scheme does not prove successful, it can be changed without much expense. Pictures for bedrooms are usually chosen for their harmonious color as well as for their individual beauty, but in any case a picture should always be one that satisfies—that one can sit and look at indefinitely without growing tired of it. Sometimes a housekeeper, who has a picture of which she is proud, plans a room to suit it in coloring.

If the bedrooms of the farmhouse are full of a collection of many kinds of furniture, bought a piece at a time without regard to the other furnishings, they present a difficult problem. But something can usually be done by a re-distribution to place in one room the

pieces of a similar style and finish, and banish all the worst pieces to one room. Very bright finishes of furniture can sometimes be improved by rubbing them with powdered pumice stone or very fine sandpaper and then waxing the surface and polishing it.

But the room in which the worst furniture is placed is not by any means hopeless. Unless the wood is very fine, it is best to bring the ill-assorted pieces into harmony by removing the finish and painting them all the same color, the final coat being of a good enamel. Before painting, however, some of the useless decorations which rendered ugly so much of the furniture of years past can probably be removed. Glued-on carved work can be cut off with a chisel, and sometimes the elaborately framed mirror of an old bureau can be given a plain new frame and hung upon the wall with much better effect. With a few such changes and a concealing cover of paint, an impossible bedroom can sometimes be made to look surprisingly well. As an extra chair in the bedroom, an arm chair of willow is useful, with cushions to match the hangings in the room. It has the advantages of cheapness, comfort and harmony with almost any kind of furniture.

Some farm housekeepers object to the use of light paint if they have never tried it. But when they try it in one room, it is usually but a short time before the other rooms are painted light, too. It does much to brighten the house and is not difficult to keep clean if a good grade of enamel is used in the finishing. A little whiting on a wet cloth will serve for the usual cleaning and the windowsills and door facings can be

repainted occasionally without doing over the whole room. Usually the doors, where sticky and greasy hands may do damage, are finished in mahogany, brown or gray. The painting of the woodwork will make the greatest change imaginable in the average old farmhouse where fancy-grained finishes, dark red or blue paint, or bright golden oak is the usual thing.

One of the chief decorations of the farm home should always be something from the out-of-doors. Not only the flowers from the garden, but those from the roadsides and sprays of apple-blossoms, autumn leaves, and all the other beauty of nature on the farm may be used. Some families keep a worthless apple-tree or peach-tree so that they can enjoy great branches of its blossoms in the spring, without thought of good fruit destroyed. Plain glass vases for displaying them are convenient in different sizes—tall vases for the taller plants, medium-sized ones, and low bowls for the pansies and violets. For the best effect is gained when the flowers look as they do when growing outdoors. The round glass, metal or porcelain flower holders such as are used by the Japanese are helpful in arranging the flowers in bowls because they hold the stems firmly in the water and give the flowers a graceful look. These can now be secured from the department stores as well as from the Japanese stores. Heavy jars of dark color are useful for holding large branches of blossoms or leaves. In my home I sometimes use some odd-shaped old brown jars in which the family sausage has been packed for several generations, and they give a very beautiful effect with red or yellow flowers.

Growing plants in the house in winter time are often much more trouble than they are worth, especially if they are too heavy to lift easily and so tender that they must be continually coddled to prevent freezing. But pots of English ivy will stand many changes of temperature and furnish a touch of green in the winter days. And the city dweller has learned that the bit of brightness for the table is easily secured by planting a few narcissus or daffodil bulbs in water in a bowl, setting them in a dark place for a time and then bringing them out to the light. If bowls of the bulbs are started at intervals, one can have something growing for the living-room table all during the winter. After blooming, the bulbs can be planted out in the garden but they do not, of course, bloom the next season.

CHAPTER IV

THE GROUNDS AND GARDENS

TO the average country person, a visit to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, is a revelation. Mount Vernon was one of the most productive and well-tilled farms in the Potomac valley in Washington's day, but it was first of all a real home. The owner's first thought seems always to have been for the graces of life, after which the problems of efficient production received their due attention. And to-day the visitor is deeply impressed with the beauty and dignity of the whole picture of the old white house, the gently sloping lawns, the beautiful trees, the long vistas to the Potomac and the general setting among the Virginia hills. George Washington was a wealthy man, but the charm of his home is not so much due to his wealth, as to his loving thought for the beautiful effect of his home surroundings. He was a student of landscape gardening, and we are told that he spent many hours planning what kind of trees to set out and just where to set them to give the harmonious groups about the grounds, and where to cut down others to open delightful vistas to the hills beyond or to the broad bend of the Potomac. And now Mount Vernon is a shrine to the American people because everything about the place

speaks of the great patriot-farmer. He still lives in the spirit of his home. As one stops to rest upon the broad verandah, one can almost see the Father of His Country, in his stately dress and powdered wig, going down the path toward the river. And we revere him to-day not only for his work in building the nation, but also because he stands for all the best and highest things in our national culture.

Of course, not every country dweller can have so fine a house or such spacious grounds as those which make Mount Vernon beautiful, but anyone can learn the simplest principles of landscape gardening and give some attention to the wider beauty of the home setting. For every farmhouse in America, however small and ugly, could by loving care, such as George Washington gave his home, be made a beauty spot in the landscape. It is not enough to have a neat yard and flower beds by the front door—real beauty is gained by considering the whole setting in the surrounding countryside, whether it be wide prairie lands, hills, woods or rivers. And to the woman on the farm falls the task of studying the possibilities of her home and interesting her husband in the work of carrying out her plans for its improvement.

If a new farmhouse is to be built, it is a comparatively easy matter to give it a beautiful setting, by choosing for it a natural knoll and by so placing the other farm buildings that they will not be in evidence. It is then only a matter of laying out the drives and walks and making the plantings for a pleasant picture. "Planning the Farmstead," Farmers' Bulletin 1132,

gives excellent help on all the practical problems of placing the house in relation to the barns, gardens and fields, and some suggestions about the beauty of the arrangement also.

But usually the farm woman cannot begin at the beginning. The old farmhouse, for better or worse, is already upon the ground, probably very poorly placed with reference to its surroundings, and the barns and outbuildings dominating the landscape. Even if the situation seems quite hopeless, a good deal can be done if the whole family coöperates in making the changes. The first step for the farm woman who wishes to beautify her home is to go to some point in front of the house and study the problem. If she can have a comfortable seat and spend a rest period there occasionally, looking at her home as a stranger might look at it, so much the better. Very often a plan will gradually take shape in her mind as she studies the setting again and again. For she must think of the whole view as a picture, to which she can make additions or rub out as she desires. One farm woman told me she always thought of her house as a face, the trees and the lawn as draperies, and the fields and hills as the background, and she tried to keep them all as harmonious as an artist would in painting a portrait.

One of the most desirable attributes of the farmhouse yard or lawn is size, even if it cannot be kept up as neatly as are the city lawns. The trig little bungalow with its bit of yard set with over-neat plantings is pretty in the city or suburbs but it seems quite out of place in the country. The country yard needs more

spread and its plantings should be informal enough to spill over the fences a bit until one scarcely knows where the lawn ends and the surrounding fields begin. The apparent size of the yard can be increased greatly by a careful arrangement of other parts of the farmstead. For instance, if the flower garden is laid out at one side of the house so that it can be seen from the road, and the orchard next to it, the grounds will seem much more spacious than they really are. Very often trees can be planted in the corner of the fields next the lawn, where they will serve as shelter for the cattle as well as add to the apparent size of the home grounds. I know one country place where a row of fine plum trees was set inside the fields by the yard, and the side fences formed a trellis for grape vines—the whole adding much to the beauty as well as to the efficiency of the farm. In fact, all the grapes needed for the family can be grown on vines trained upon trellises where they add to the beauty of the place or cut off the view of ugly outbuildings. And in the West especially, the farm woodlot, kept up for fence-posts and firewood, or the windbreak of evergreens, can add to the beauty of the home.

When the farm woman has decided upon the general outlines of her picture, she can draw rough sketches of the house and grounds and background. Even when poorly drawn, they will help to show the proportions and to suggest changes that can be made to improve it. Soon she will have in outline the plan she hopes to follow—making use of the best features of the place as it stands and making proper additions to complete the

picture. Large trees especially should never be removed until one has made every possible effort to fit them into an attractive picture. Some one has said, "It takes the Lord a hundred years to grow a tree, but any fool can cut it down in half an hour." Even when one decides definitely to remove some of the trees, and this must often be done, it is wise to leave them in place until the new plantings have grown somewhat.

Some of the old colonial homes have a wooded lawn or grove, thick set with trees, through which one catches glimpses of the house, and this is very attractive in certain situations. In placing a new home a bit of natural woodland can sometimes be left in front of the house to form a very charming setting. But the modern tendency seems to be toward the open lawn in front of the house with the planting to the sides and to the rear. The worst effect is that of straggling "ornamental" trees or fancy flower-beds marring the middle of the view. As a farm woman remarked, such a lawn looks as if it were about to "get up and walk," and it certainly is not restful.

Let us suppose, then, that the farm woman has chosen for her picture a green lawn stretching in an unbroken sweep up to the steps of the house, bordered along the sides by shrubbery or trees, the hard outlines of the house softened by trees and foundation plantings, and the farm buildings partly screened from view. Large changes should be made first if possible. Perhaps the roadway is awkwardly placed. It should enter at one side of the lawn and swing over in a slight curve to the

side door of the house—never run directly to the front door or wind about senselessly through the lawn. The drive must be well-graded, especially if it is a dirt road. Roads of macadam or gravel, surfaced with a coal-tar preparation, are best for country use. Brick paving or cement is too hard in its outlines and too light in color. For the idea is to have the roadway blend into its surroundings, not attract attention to itself. Walks about the house may be surfaced in the same way. If cement is used, its color should be well toned down with lampblack to do away with its unpleasant whiteness in the grass. One of the prettiest walks for the back yard or garden is made of big flat stones set into the grass, so low that the lawn mower will pass over them.

Usually the outbuildings are the worst eyesore of the farm. When they were built they were probably put where some one thought they would be convenient, without regard for appearances; when a little more care would have placed them where they would not be so much in evidence. If possible, badly placed barns and stables should be moved to a better location. A big barn which cannot be moved can be partly hidden by plantings of tall trees like the poplars, and these also give the barn some protection from lightning. On one farm a great change for the better was brought about by placing a half dozen of the smaller buildings on rollers and assembling them side by side behind a grape arbor. And the farmer found after trying the new arrangement that they were much more convenient grouped in this fashion and saved him many a step in the course of the day's chores. After all, it is not necessary to have each

kind of work in a house to itself across the yard from everything else, as some people seem to think. The farmer should route his work at the regular tasks as the housewife does in her kitchen. And when he checks up the number of steps from one of the farm buildings to another he may find that efficiency and beauty can be attained at the same time by a general re-arrangement.

The color of the farmhouse is important in working out the picture. If there are many trees, nothing is an improvement upon the colonial fashion of painting the house white with green shutters. It shines out from the green with both cordiality and dignity. A weather-beaten house without paint will blend softly into its background, and one can secure a similar effect by using paint or stain of soft gray or moss green. Brick houses, when painted, are best in some brick color—a dull creamy buff is much better than the usual brick red. When a trim is used, it should be lighter than the body of the house, to set it off from the darker background, but any trim should be used sparingly on country homes. A dull buff color with a white trim and porches, and dark green shutters make a good combination. If there are many sawed or turned decorations on the house, its general effect can be improved a great deal by painting it all in one tone.

The trees about a farmhouse serve a double purpose of furnishing shade and forming a frame for the picture. For the second purpose, they may be set somewhat in front and at each side of the house—allowing a great deal of space for growth if they are varieties which become large. Thus placed the branches will in

time cover some of the angles of the house and soften the general effect. Or if the house is beautiful in itself the planting can be made at the rear to form a background for it. The trees chosen should be those which thrive in that region—good native trees are usually best—and those which seem most beautiful to the home-maker. Many farmers use one variety largely in the planting and then name the home from the trees—The Elms, Seven Oaks, Maplecroft, Hickory Hill, etc. A few varieties of trees are undesirable because of their lack of permanence. In general the catalpas, poplars and willows are rapid growers and useful for temporary plantings, but as they grow older break easily and become shabby-looking. A few evergreens are charming in the winter landscape but too many of them will make the scene gloomy and if they are near the house will cut off the light from the windows in the winter time. Great care must be taken that the trees are not planted too close together. It is almost impossible to realize, as one looks at the thrifty little elm sapling, how much space the tree will take when it is full grown. It is better to allow it plenty of room even if one has to fill in the gaps with a temporary tree or two for quick results.

The farm home setting should have what the artist calls "balance"—that is, a similar mass of foliage on each side. But this does not mean that one must plant trees or groups of trees exactly alike at the right and left of the house, though this is sometimes done. A very large tree at one side can be balanced by a group of smaller trees upon the other; or a small slender tree,

by a porch planting of shrubs and vines; or a heavy windbreak on one side by a scattered group of trees on the other; or a woodlot in the background to the left may make it desirable to place most of the lawn planting on the right. The idea is that if the mass of greenery in the picture, to the left of the house and to the right, could be put upon the scales, one would not greatly outweigh the other. This is a very simple principle. But whatever the plan, there should be many trees about a country home. It is true that wrong things can be done with trees—but nothing that is half so bad as doing without them altogether.

But the trees are merely the framework of the picture that must be filled in with shrubs and vines. Many a country home gives an unpleasant impression because of the bareness of its foundations. It seems to be just on the point of getting up to walk off when it should look as if it were going to stay there permanently. In fact, the most charming houses look as if they had "just grown" into their surroundings and are so well adapted to the place where they are one cannot think of them in any other setting. One way to accomplish this is to hide the foundation of the house with hardy shrubs. Many native bushes are excellent for foundation planting. The mountain laurel and the rhododendron are often used in West Virginia, with tall ferns in between, to give the house a graceful setting. In the middle west the buckberry is used in this way, and nearly every locality has some hardy low shrub suitable for screening the foundation. The bushes should always be young and thrifty when set out and given plenty of rich soil

in which to grow. They should not be set in a straight line but with seeming carelessness, some near the house, others out two or three feet so that the line of green will be uneven.

In very shady places the foundation can be covered with English ivy, the ends of the vines being clipped off occasionally if it is not desired that they run up the sides of the house. One farm woman covered the foundation of her house by setting up a two-foot wire fence and covering it with honeysuckle vines. When the vines became too exuberant they were clipped back with garden shears. And another farm woman, who lacked a railing to her porch, stretched a similar strip of heavy wire between the posts and trained honeysuckle vines into a green growing porch railing. With honeysuckle framing the upper part of the porch as well, it made a very beautiful effect. Among the hardy plants to be bought from the florist for foundation planting are the white funkia or day lily, spirea Van Houttei, the Japanese barberry, and the hydrangeas. The objection is sometimes made that foundation plantings will make the house damp, but this is not borne out by experience. A proper planting will, in fact, tend to keep the house walls dry by absorbing the moisture from the soil.

If there are few trees about the house, vines on the porches are a real necessity. Again one can call upon the woods and fields for one's favorite wild vine of the neighborhood. Bittersweet is a good porch vine and so is the trumpet vine, though both are rather heavy. The florist can provide many good climbers. Rambler roses

are easily grown but are apt to look untidy before the end of the summer. There are many other climbing roses suitable for porches which are vigorous and hardy. One of my own favorites for a lighter effect is the fragrant *clematis paniculata,* or virgin's bower, which blooms in August and is a pleasing vine all through the growing season.

Shrubs and small trees may border the front lawn and again native plants are desirable. If the soil is acid, mountain laurel and rhododendron can be used in sections where it is native. Some farmers question the use of plants poisonous to stock, but stock-raisers in West Virginia who have always had laurel in their door-yards, assure me there is little danger of poisoning, since the animals will not touch the laurel shoots unless they are driven by extreme hunger. Nothing makes a more beautiful combination than clumps of native dogwood intermingled with redbud, with an under-planting of laurel and azaleas. In spring it presents a picture that is a joy to every country person's heart.

If shrubs are ordered from a florist, care must be taken that they fit properly into a country picture. Fancy plants of all kinds, odd-shaped ones, and those with vari-colored leaves very seldom do. But the spireas, lilacs, syringas, japonicas, altheas, bush honeysuckles and some others are quite at home in any setting. Along the shrubbery or in the grass, flowering bulbs may be planted. At my own farm home I have the edges of the lawn and under the trees planted with old-fashioned yellow daffodils or "Easter flowers" in great quantities and they are very beautiful in

spring. They also stray carelessly across the lawn. Daffodil, narcissus and crocus bulbs are particularly good for such use because their leaves are not conspicuous and they bloom and die down before the grass must be cut.

Of course on any country place the beautifying of the yard means a constant struggle with the farm animals, with the farmer's careless habits of leaving farm machinery about, and with the chickens. Unfortunately, many of the dooryard shrubs are most eatable, and the calves and sheep seem to prefer them to the finest grass. Yet there are in every locality certain vines and shrubs, often the thorny ones, which will make a fair growth even in the pasture field where the cattle are grazing every day. And such a field is a good place to seek for yard plantings if there are likely to be many calves and horses about. Small trees can be protected from breaking by a heavy wire guard, and the chickens can be kept away from shrubbery plantings by a guard of brushwood until the earth is firm enough to discourage scratching. Flowers and tender plants which are easily destroyed should be grown in the garden, protected by a good fence.

The problem of farm machinery in the yard is not so serious in farming communities as it was some years ago. The modern farmer has learned that proper shelter for his machines will pay for the extra trouble and expense, and that a "poor-folks" appearance of his home place will mark him as a poor farmer in the eyes of his neighbors. The Grange has always advocated the importance of a good-looking home and in some communi-

ties the local Grange sets an annual clean-up day on which everyone undertakes to improve his home surroundings. In fact some of the women proudly tell me that in their communities one can tell just by looking at the farm homes, which ones shelter Grangers and which do not.

The fact is that the development of a beautiful setting for the farm home is often one of the best investments that the farmer can make. If he ever wishes to sell his home, it adds greatly to its value. It gives the whole family a new sense of dignity—as if they lived upon an estate instead of on a mere patch of land—and a feeling that they must live up to their surroundings. This is particularly important for the farm children to whom farm life often seems hateful because it is full of hard work and lacking in the beautiful things which they long for. But if they can understand that country life has its own beauty and dignity they will not feel so strong an impulse to leave it. They will learn in childhood to appreciate the trees and flowers which they help to care for and to take a real delight in country living.

The Vegetable Garden

The home vegetable garden on American farms is sometimes the woman's province, sometimes the man's, but always the home-maker is greatly interested in the growing of the vegetables with which she is to feed the family. Good vegetable gardening is a complete science in itself, as each kind of vegetable has its own needs and its own enemies, and the writer cannot in a brief

space make more than a few general suggestions. The Department of Agriculture has prepared helpful bulletins on almost every phase of home and market gardening, and the wise farm woman makes a study of those which apply to the vegetables of the home garden and to the local soil conditions. A few of these bulletins are listed in the Farm Woman's Bookshelf in the back of this book.

The old-time vegetable garden was laid out in small plots with cross walks, with the gooseberry bushes and other small fruits scattered about at random, and could scarcely be cultivated except with the spade and other hand tools. But the modern farmer has developed a much more efficient system. He now lays out his garden in long rows which can be plowed and cultivated almost entirely with horsepower. The permanent garden which contains the small fruits and berries, the winter onions, rhubarb, asparagus and other perennial vegetables is set off to itself where a careless hired man will not plow into it when he turns the garden. Those vegetables which mature earliest are planted together so that the rows can be planted again for a later crop. And those which are to remain in the ground until late are planted at one side so that most of the garden space can be plowed up and sowed to rye in September for a winter mulch crop. The roots of the rye spread through the soil and form a network of fibrous material which, when the ground is plowed up in the spring, quickly decays and forms new plant food for the garden crops to feed on. The rye is plowed under when it is only two or three inches high in the spring. If a cover crop is not

used, the ground is usually mulched with manure during the winter, or if the soil is a heavy clay, it can be plowed up and left lying in a rough state over winter. With these modern methods, much of the heaviest work of the garden is eliminated, and a plentiful supply of vegetables for the family can be grown.

So important is the vegetable garden to the farm family that in the recent slump in farm prices, it has often been the saving factor. Different authorities have computed its value in different ways, but every farm woman knows, from what she has heard of city retail prices for vegetables, that the products provided for her family by her home garden are equivalent to a very great deal of money. As to the size of the garden, the farm women tell me that they plan to have it large enough to provide enough vegetables even in a bad year. In a good year they have plenty and to spare, with a cellar full of canned or stored vegetables to keep for the winter.

The selection of varieties of vegetables for the home garden is very important, as different varieties frequently differ greatly in palatability. In general, the varieties of vegetables which are popular with the market gardener are not the best for the home garden, because they have been developed more for their shipping qualities than for their flavor. Nearly always they are harder and more fibrous than some of the other varieties, and produce the whole crop at one time instead of covering a longer season, as is desirable for the home garden. For this reason, it is wise to select varieties carefully and experiment until one is found which is

a vigorous grower, pleasing to the palate, and suited to the needs of the family.

Some farm families do not realize the best from their garden because they plant too few kinds of vegetables. Even to a country appetite, a vegetable served nearly every day during its season becomes tiresome. Asparagus, salsify, kohl rabi, brussels sprouts, okra, egg plant, endive, Swiss chard, Chinese cabbage, and many other vegetables which are excellent food are almost unknown to some farm families, though they could raise them with as little trouble as they raise beans and cabbage. One's appetite for vegetables is usually acquired—many children will scarcely eat them at all unless they are forced to—so a new vegetable may not appeal to the palate at the first taste. But if it is served and eaten regularly, it will usually be liked by all the family, and the addition to the variety of food will be a help to the housewife in planning the meals. Some families regularly try one new vegetable each year, planting a small plot of a good variety and trying to learn to like it prepared in different ways. If the family enjoys it, it takes its place in the general garden and a new kind of vegetable is tried the next year.

The recent discoveries concerning vitamines have emphasized the importance of leaf vegetables and carrots in the daily diet. Country people generally did not need to be told about this for they had all observed the vitalizing powers of "greens" of every kind in the spring. But, now that we know more definitely the part that the leaf vegetables play in our nutrition, we are keeping up their use through the summer and as

far into the winter as possible. Certain varieties of spinach and kale will furnish greens until late in the fall and will remain in the ground all winter with a little protection, for a very early spring crop. And some families have found that vigorous plants of endive, Swiss chard, rhubarb and other leafy plants can be dug up, with considerable soil about their roots and set on the cellar floor, where they will furnish an occasional "mess of greens" for the winter.

It is said that the French, who are experts at preparing good things for the table, have learned the art of using many kinds of vegetables before they are mature and so secure a more delicate flavor. The farm woman can use this art to vary the food for her family from the abounding plenty of the farm garden. Many of the vegetables can be planted thickly and later thinned out as they are used for the table. The very young leaves of all the leaf vegetables are much better in flavor than the fully developed ones; tiny beets cooked with their tender leaves make a delicious dish in early spring; and half-grown beans served in a white sauce are even better than the full-grown vegetable.

The farm garden often becomes a source of income to the farmer's wife, particularly if she enjoys outdoor work, as with very little extra expense she can develop some specialty for which there is a local market. The ordinary vegetables in their season are seldom profitable in a small way, the best success being attained with the unusual things or with very early or late crops. One farm woman made fifty dollars on very early cabbage for which she bought plants started in the South. A

little greenhouse, if greenhouses are not common in that neighborhood, will often give the woman the start of her neighbors and a chance at the high-priced early market, or she can make money from tomato, cabbage and other plants by selling them in the neighborhood. And sometimes a very late garden, with corn, peas, and string beans, planted in the late summer will bring in money if one does not meet an early frost. An Iowa farm woman writes me: "I find there is a good market for any early vegetable, but have found slicing cucumbers and early tomatoes much the easiest to raise, gather and sell. Early cabbage is good but one does not get the return from a dozen early cabbage plants that the same number of tomatoes or cucumbers would bring. Real early potatoes are good also, but require more work and a larger patch of ground. My favorite market crop is asparagus. It is easy to sell and requires very little work to prepare for market. I have raised strawberries also, and while they are profitable, I have not found them a royal road to wealth by any means. They must have more care and are subject to weather conditions that can be morely easily overcome on the other crops."

A big asparagus bed, as the farm woman suggests, is a money-making project in some neighborhoods, especially if there are city people near who have grown to be fond of it. A good variety should be secured—the Washington, blight-resisting varieties developed by the Department of Agriculture are among the best—and every precaution taken to insure a good yield. In the spring when the shoots begin to appear, they are cut off

just below the ground, bunched and tied, and delivered to the customers.

Other farm women specialize on pickles and catsup and set apart a section of the garden for growing cucumbers and other vegetables for that purpose. Still others find that the small fruits are more profitable and not too exacting on a woman's time and energy. But whatever is undertaken in this way, it is always a side issue. The chief purpose of the farm garden is the furnishing of a plentiful supply of health-giving vegetables for the family all the year round.

Because of the rush of farm work in the spring when the home garden is apt to be neglected, it is wise for the woman on the farm to have as much as possible done in the fall. After the first killing frost, the vines and plants should be pulled up and burned to destroy any insect pests upon them, the bean poles and tomato stakes picked up and put away—and perhaps new ones made for the next season's crop—the permanent garden put in shape for the winter, and the regular garden plowed, or given its mulch of manure. During the winter the garden can be planned, changes to be made can be drawn out on paper and the seeds for new varieties chosen carefully. Then when Spring comes, with its call to planting in the fields and its few good days when every minute is precious, the home garden can be attended to properly in the least possible amount of time.

The Farm Flower Garden

One of the strongest characteristics of the American country woman is her love of beauty, and this love is

best expressed in her delight in flowers and beautiful plants. Even under the hardest conditions she contrives somehow to have a flower in a pot or a little bed of bright blossoms in a corner of the yard. She rightly feels that flowers "pay for their keep" because they are an inspiration and a means of getting away, in spirit at least, from her daily toil. They are often the one luxury of the farm home.

But even in her love for flowers the farm woman has to consider how much time and strength she can afford to spend, and make sure that the ends justify the work it takes to reach them. It may well be that, looking over the gardens of some of her neighbors, she will decide that the energy expended in caring for many potted plants in the house in the winter, managing a pit, a hotbed and a cold-frame, giving up valuable hours when the work of the farm is most pressing, and coddling tender plants which often cause as much disappointment as pleasure, might better be used in some other direction. Indeed I have known some farm women who, it seemed to me, paid much too high a price for the beauty and inspiration of their flowers.

But even if one has little time or energy, she need not deny herself the beauty of flowers altogether. Returning travelers from England and France tell of their delight in the cottage gardens over there, in which the farm workers produce a glowing mass of color with perhaps a half hour of labor in the evening after their long day in the fields. And in our own country, there are many lovely farm gardens which require very little work —though they are not nearly so numerous as I should

like to see them. Every farm home needs its garden with something blooming all the growing season. And if it is planned wisely it will be a rest and recreation and add much to the beauty and joy of our American country life.

The farm flower garden may well be a permanent garden, which will grow into greater beauty from year to year, and consist of plants which will endure a considerable amount of neglect. Personally, I do not care much for the garden of annuals, brilliant as it is. It gives a bright blaze of color for a time, and it serves a good purpose on the rented farm or in the early days of the permanent garden, but when it is gone, it is all over. One must begin again the next year exactly where one started the year before. And if something interferes with its planting in the spring the garden plot lies an unsightly weed-patch for a whole season. It is better to build toward some future beauty, season after season, and to know that, however much one may have to neglect them, kindly nature is developing the plants day by day. So the ideal garden is the hardy garden. It is a permanent investment in beauty and color, with infinite possibilities of harmonious effects. Fortunately, the very wealthy people of the United States have become much interested in the beautiful European gardens, so the best floriculturists of the country have been devoting their attention to the development of hardy flowers. Many delightful new forms have been found and it is now easy to get expert advice upon any phase of hardy gardening. Helpful lists of flowers for various locations are prepared by the seedsmen and some

of the catalogues of hardy plants give suggestions for their proper cultivation. There are also many good books on perennial flower culture, a few of which are listed for the Farm Woman's Bookshelf.

The flower garden must have its own special plot. If it adjoins the vegetable garden, it should be set off from it by a fence or large shrubbery. Otherwise some careless plowman is likely to destroy the roots when preparing the ground for vegetables. It should lie next the yard, not far from the kitchen door, so that the housekeeper can spend a few minutes with her flowers while a cake is baking or the potatoes are cooking. Even a few minutes each day of rest and attention to the growing plants will mean much both to the woman and the flowers. If the garden can be seen from the road, so much the better, for it is one of the chief pleasures of the gardener to make the world brighter for others. It should be fenced securely from the pigs and the chickens. If the fence is unsightly, it can be made beautiful by training rambler roses, wild honeysuckle or other vines upon it, taking care, however, not to obscure the view of the flowers from the windows of the house.

Since many of the hardy flowers will do well in moderate shade, it is often possible to have a satisfactory garden on ground of little value for raising vegetables. But of course it must be taken into account that flower roots and tree roots cannot feed on the same food at the same time. One of the pleasantest corners of my own garden is tucked away under a great black-jack tree where it gets very little direct sunshine. It was once a part of the vegetable garden and given up be-

cause nothing would grow there. Now it is a real joy. In the deepest shade are wild ferns and early spring flowers and the beautiful Solomon's seal. Then there are masses of old-fashioned phlox, day-lilies, peonies, mallows, and cardinal flowers, all of which do well in that location. It is better, however, to have a part of the garden plot in strong sunlight so that the sun-loving plants can be added for variety.

The garden plot may be laid off very simply. Fancy-shaped beds and winding walks and hedges are no longer considered good taste in the little garden. For a small rectangular garden plot a straight grass or pebbled path down the middle with a wide border on each side, is the simplest form. The borders may be from four to twelve feet wide, as one can step between the clumps of flowers when working with them. The path may be arched with roses and lead to a restful bench at the end of the garden or to a vine-covered summer-house. A square garden may have a wide border all round and a central plot of flowers. But it is sometimes interesting to vary the plan by reserving a side walk for a special grouping of flowers. For instance, a border of blue flowers is very beautiful, or blue and white, or all yellow. And a farm woman tells me that she particularly enjoys a cozy nook in her garden, hemmed in by vines and shrubs so that it is out of sight of the house and the rest of the farm. There she can rest on a comfortable bench and feel far away from her usual activities. There she can think things out and "find herself," and then go back to her work feeling that she has had a real vacation.

Native Flowers

The lack of ready money does not make a flower garden impossible, for flowers do not necessarily cost money. In fact, many of our hardy garden favorites are only the native flowers of our woods and fields given good soil and cultivation. I have already spoken of the shady corner full of ferns from the woods, and the shy spring flowers. But there are more showy blossoms, too, which can be found on the farm. Nothing could be more attractive than thick clumps of cardinal flowers, which grow wild in shady places in many parts of the country. Their color is very beautiful, they are especially hospitable to butterflies and always have the fluttering bright wings about them. Another brilliant flower of the fields is the butterfly-weed, of a bright reddish-orange color, which grows best in a dry soil. Solomon's seal has inconspicuous blossoms but is always a delight because of its shiny leaves and the supremely graceful arch of its stem. Wild larkspur is fine for bedding, and the wild blue chicory is beautiful in the morning hours. Wild white and lavender asters and goldenrod also respond to cultivation very well. Then there are all the native flowering shrubs and vines —so many and so varied in almost every part of the United States that anyone can develop a garden from them. And one of their best features is that they will almost take care of themselves if they are given proper conditions and suitable soil. The building up of such a collection adds a new joy to all one's walks and drives, and the plants themselves serve as pleasant reminders

of many a jaunt into the woods and fields. In digging up wild plants, it is necessary to avoid breaking the roots and to keep the soil about them intact if possible. For this reason small plants are much better for re-setting than large ones. Ferns should be dug in the early spring before the fronds have uncurled. And it is best always to leave a part of the clump of wild-flowers in its original habitation, so that the woods will not lose their beauty when they flower.

The objection raised by some farmers that the cultivation of "weeds" in the garden will cause them to seed into the fields, is not borne out in actual experience. I have seen them cultivated in many gardens, but I have known of but one instance—and that was of the common ox-eye daisy—of a weed spreading from a garden. A few species, like the poppies of Flanders fields, known to be a pest elsewhere, may well be avoided. But most of the native flowering plants never become so common in the fields as to become a menace to agriculture.

Borrowed Flowers

Not all the penniless gardener's plants need come direct from nature. There are usually old gardens in the neighborhood, full of the old hardy favorites—and who is so generous as the grower of flowers? The gardener, if she is at all like the gardeners I have known, will be more than glad to give the beginner a plant or a bulb or a slip from almost everything she owns, and feel quite repaid by her enthusiasm. And as the new gardener adds some of the newer hardy varieties to her own collection she can have the pleasure of dividing

those with her generous neighbor. In this way much of my own hardy garden was accumulated, a bulb from this old garden and a plant from that, until my garden spot is like an old-time patchwork quilt—bright with borrowed bits of color. And every blossom is fragrant with the friendship of the other gardeners in my neighborhood. I sometimes even call the flowers by the names of the persons who gave them to me—much to the amusement of some of my city visitors.

There is another good reason, too, for such a method of developing a country garden. The plants which have thrived under ordinary conditions in your own locality are so thoroughly acclimated that they are almost sure to grow vigorously. Next to the native plants, they will grow and bloom in spite of neglect, and this makes them most desirable for the farm garden. Some of them are almost everlasting. Many flowers in my own garden were planted by my grandfather seventy years ago, and I have heard of peonies, day-lilies, and German irises that had lived for more than a hundred years and yet bloomed with unabated vigor. The only fault I find with these old-time flowers is that too many of them bloom in the early spring. But by planning carefully for the new varieties to fill in the gaps in the blooming season, one can soon manage a succession of bloom.

The Dollar-a-Year Garden

I have known some charming farm gardens upon which the woman spent but a dollar a year. She would choose a new plant or two and a few packages of seed, and these additions to her "borrowed" garden, with seed

she had saved from the year before, in time developed a display of flowers which rivalled those of far wealthier persons. Sometimes she and a neighbor together ordered packets of the more expensive seed and then divided them, so that each could have a few clumps of the new variety. Of course in beginning a hardy garden it saves much time to order two or three-year-old clumps so that a good effect can be secured immediately. But the other method, persisted in from year to year, will finally produce just as good results.

In planning the garden, it is a good idea to draw a map of it on a large sheet of paper, marking it for deep shade, lighter shade and sunshine, and indicating where certain kinds of flowers are to be planted. The tallest varieties should be placed farthest from the walk, then those of medium height, and on down to the tiny bedding plants. Arranged in this way, one does not cut off the view of another. In a central bed of course the tallest will be in the center, the others graduating toward the walk. Yet it is not necessary to arrange them exactly, because the general effect needs to be rather informal. The flowers are scattered about together in good-sized clumps, all the varieties mingled into a harmonious grouping. Each clump of flowers when it is well grown will cover about eighteen inches of space, so this must be allowed it in the permanent bed. Peonies need three feet or more, and they should never be disturbed. While the hardy plants are small, the spaces between can be filled with annuals or flowers that will not be injured by resetting.

Before ordering seeds or plants, it is wise, also, to plan

the blooming season, so that from the earliest crocus till the last chrysanthemum there will always be some spot of color along the garden walk. Most desirable of all are the everblooming varieties. The tufted pansies, with which one can border the walks and cover the ground under the roses, are seldom without a blossom from early spring till frost. The gaillardias, the yellow coreopsis, and the beautiful delphiniums are almost ever-blooming if they are rightly managed. And by choosing the earliest to the latest varieties of improved phloxes, it is possible to have them in bloom almost the whole season. With these as a basis, other varieties can be chosen which will ensure a steady succession of bloom from April to November.

But before making a final choice of seeds or plants, it is well to note everything the seedsman says about them. Unless they are "very hardy," they probably will not do well in a country garden. Many plants listed as hardy will not survive the winter without protection, and it is this protecting and coddling of the flowers that the farm woman must avoid. The seedsman's location must be taken into account, too, for what is hardy in his garden may not be in yours if you live a little farther north or at a higher altitude. In my own experience I have found the seedsmen rather too optimistic about their plants surviving the winter unprotected. The other gardeners in your neighborhood will probably give you helpful advice upon this subject. In general it is safer to order the old favorites than those recently developed, as there is no certainty that the new hybrids which the seedsman features will do well

under ordinary conditions. But the old stand-bys which are carried from year to year in his pages are almost sure to be successful.

Propagation

The seeds of hardy plants can be sown either in the permanent beds or in special seed beds, from which they can be transplanted. Some of the seeds, especially the phloxes, are exceedingly slow in germinating and in the spring the tiny plants from seeds sown the summer before are late in coming up, and care must be taken that the plot is not disturbed too soon. After digging up a perennial plot and sowing it in annuals, I have had the perennials begin to show themselves here and there a month or so later. The seeds need not be planted in the early spring if other work is pressing. I have planted seeds in a fairly shady garden plot at any time from June till late September and, except in an unusual drought, with very good success. To make success more sure, a part of the packet of seeds can be planted at one time, the rest at another. When the weather is dry a piece of coffee-sacking spread over the bed will help to keep it moist around the seeds. But it must be removed as soon as the plants begin to appear.

As seeds of hardy flowers seldom produce plants large enough to bloom the first year, one needs some beds of annuals for the new garden. Even after the garden is well established, it is wise to have a small seed-bed of annuals each year for transplanting into any gaps in the border where the hardy flowers have been winter-

killed. I have used calliopsis, phlox Drummondii, petunias, verbenas, portulaca, cosmos and asters for this purpose.

Some of the more highly developed hardy flowers do not always come true from the seed, so it is better to buy plants instead. This is especially true of the phloxes, which are apt to revert to the original magenta color even in the well-established varieties. When a good variety is found, it can be increased by dividing the roots, by planting the seed or by stem cuttings. A small cutting bed is not much trouble if it can be kept safe from the chickens, near the kitchen door in a well-drained spot. The ground is prepared by mixing in a good deal of sand and providing drainage if necessary. The bed is kept moist by giving it a little water every day. As the cuttings can be planted very close together, a small space will make considerable additions to the garden in the course of the growing season. It is interesting to try a variety of one's best plants—making sure always that the cutting has at least one bud or joint well covered, and removing any leaves. In a short time many of the cuttings will begin to put out leaves, showing that they are beginning to develop roots, and they can later be transplanted with some of the sandy soil about them, to the permanent garden. I have propagated fine chrysanthemums, phloxes, roses and many of the flowering shrubs in this way.

An even easier method for rooting the harder cuttings is the pioneer fashion of pushing the cutting deep into a potato and then planting it in the garden. If the tuber tries to grow, the shoots are broken off at the

ground. The rotting potato keeps the cutting moist enough, even in dry weather, for it to start roots. It is the time-honored custom in most farm gardens to cover new rose plants the first winter with an old glass fruit jar, but even this protection is not necessary for the ramblers and other vigorous growers if they are started early in the season.

As flowers are all heavy feeders, it is desirable to prepare a permanent bed carefully by mixing well-rotted stable manure with the soil to a depth of two feet or more. If the soil is very hard, old leaves, rotten straw, sand, or moderate amounts of coal ashes will help to render it porous enough for the plant roots to penetrate. After the plants are well established, all that is necessary is a light mulch of old manure in the fall, which is dug in around the roots in the spring. The work of a hardy garden can be done at almost any time one can find time for it. Even the transplanting can be done in summer if care is taken to prevent the roots from drying out and to tramp the earth down well about them in their new home. If one has doubts about moving a plant in hot weather, it can be cut in two, and part of it left in the original soil to propagate from if the other should die. Very little watering of hardy plants, except when they are transplanted, is necessary or desirable.

The following list of flowers by no means includes all the varieties that have proved beautiful and dependable in the farm gardens I have known, but perhaps it will be suggestive to the amateur gardener.

To grow from seed: Hibiscus or mallow, clove pinks,

sweet williams, perennial pansies, Shasta daisies, golden glow, delphiniums, hollyhocks, gaillardias, coreopsis, columbines, gas plant or dictamnus, sea lavender, and oriental poppies. Plants or bulbs to be bought or "borrowed": Narcissus, tulip, lily of the valley, day lilies, summer-blooming lilies, phloxes, roses, flowering shrubs, German iris, Japanese iris, chrysanthemums. Very few of the hybrid tea roses will stand much neglect—as I have learned from experience. The ramblers, however, and other sturdy climbing roses can take care of themselves and so can some of the old-fashioned bush roses which our grandmothers loved. Some of the best hybrid perpetuals also grow with very little care in the average farm garden. One of my own favorites is the pink sweet-briar rose which, though its blooming season is short, gives a delightful spicy odor from its leaves all summer and is gay with bright-colored hips in the fall. It grows wild in some sections of the United States but can be ordered from the seedsmen. Other wild roses are also worth trying for the farm garden, as they nearly all respond well to cultivation.

Many of the old New England flower gardens are made a source of income as well as of pleasure for the gardener, by the sale of flowers, seeds, bulbs, and plants. This is not often possible at the farm home, but at least the gardener can add to her pleasures by calling upon her garden for gifts to her friends. Artistic bunches of straw flowers, sea lavender, or ornamental grasses make excellent gifts to brighten some friend's home in winter. The lover of flowers will always appreciate

gifts of choice seeds, put up in dainty ribboned packages. House plants can be propagated in the cutting-bed for small thrifty plants to give away at Christmas time. Bulbs can be dug in the fall and planted in pots to be in bloom for Christmas giving. Sachets of lavender are always appreciated by a housewife and bunches of carefully marked herbs for seasoning. In fact, the gardener will find that her garden gifts are much appreciated. For the best gift of all is that chosen with a loving thought of the recipient, and that carries with it something of the giver's personality and of the things which she loves.

It is to be hoped that the time will soon come when every farmhouse in the United States will have its hardy garden, bright with color all the season through. It will show that a new spirit is abroad—a spirit of pervading loveliness which will do much to brighten our American country life. And it will give an opportunity for relaxation and inspiration to the country family during the rush of the season's work, when it is impossible for them to seek recreation elsewhere. For, as every country person knows, there is nowhere like a pleasant garden for quiet thoughts. It is a place of rest and peace. And the creation of so much beauty brings one very close to the Divine. As Katherine Tynan, the poet, says of the gardener:

> The wonders of the skies for him
> Shall open, nor his eyes be dim,
> And seeing the first leaf unfold,
> He shall praise God a hundredfold.

Yea, he shall learn from his employ
How God turns mourning into joy,
And from earth's graves calls up at last
His flowers when all the winter's past.

CHAPTER V

THE HOME BUSINESS

"EFFICIENCY is the shortest distance between two points," and "Organization is the art of getting someone else to do your work," are two definitions which should be taken very seriously to heart by the farm housekeeper. Henry Ford has said many times that there is more waste motion and misplaced energy on the farm than anywhere else in the world. He was speaking particularly of the man's side of the work. But if he knew the conditions of the woman's work indoors in an ill-arranged old farmhouse he would undoubtedly be even more emphatic. There is a tremendous amount of lost motion in every farm home.

But to one who knows the farm conditions, it does not seem surprising. For sheer executive ability there is no task more exacting than the organization of the work and play and recreation of the farm home. I dare say there are occasions when even Henry Ford himself would not know which way to turn. So many kinds of work are going on at once, much of it by young and careless hands which have to be watched at every moment, weather conditions make so much difference that work can scarcely be planned from one day to another, a cow gets sick, or worms attack the garden at exactly

the wrong moment, somebody gets hurt, and one thing interferes with another until it seems impossible to make plans that can be carried out in practice. And yet planning the day's work ahead is absolutely necessary if one is to avoid continual confusion and over-work.

One of the first things for the housekeeper to find out is how much work she is actually doing. Miss Ilena M. Bailey of the Bureau of Home Economics of the United States Department of Agriculture has recently made a chart by which a woman can check up the amount of time spent at various tasks in the house and out. And for her own enlightenment it is important for the housekeeper to keep a record for a week or two at least, so that she can see just where all the time goes. The plan is very simple. On a sheet of paper, two circles are drawn for the clock face of the morning and afternoon of one day, with numbers as on the face of the clock. Or a series of the charts already prepared will be sent on application from the Department of Agriculture. On these clock-faces the different tasks are written in or marked with colored crayons to show the amount of time spent. For instance, if crayons are used, the blue can represent time given to preparing food and clearing away after meals. Red can represent the time used to put the house in order, yellow the milk work and buttermaking, green the time spent in the garden, etc. Unusual tasks can be marked with a black pencil and the name written in. Such a time chart takes but a few minutes to keep each day, yet at the end of the week one can gain from it a general idea of the time and energy given to the several kinds of work.

Sometimes the mere thought of a time schedule will help to shorten the work, as the looking forward to some new amusement often does. One woman told me that she discovered after she got her radio set that she could easily cut an hour from her work after supper, in order to listen in on the radio at half-past seven. Little tasks which had previously been left till after the meal were attended to while the supper was cooking, much of the cleaning up was done and the children hurried through their evening chores, so that she was able to leave the kitchen with everything finished a whole hour earlier than had been her former custom. And many a farm family has discovered in the past few years that much of the work can be speeded up considerably if one has an evening automobile ride in prospect. As a child I used to add interest and vim to the task of washing dishes by seeing how quickly I could get them done, and then trying to better my own record, as an athlete does when training for a race. They were done well, too, for any carelessness from haste I looked upon as not "sporting," and a broken dish was considered a great point against the record. Soon I learned to clear the table, wash the dishes and put them away with unusual deftness, and in about one-third of the time I had formerly spent dawdling over the task. So, once tried with the time-chart, keeping up with the daily schedule becomes a sort of game—unless one foolishly overdoes it—and a real help to shortening the working hours in the home.

Very often when a woman sees her work before her on the time-chart, she is surprised at the amount given

to some of the simplest tasks. Because she has the habit of doing them in a certain way, she has never thought how much time they were consuming. Very few women have so good a system of clearing the table and washing the dishes that the time cannot be cut considerably by the use of a wheeled cart, good equipment for dishwashing and a more convenient placing of utensils. And much of the time usually wasted while the meal is cooking can be put to good use in washing up and putting away utensils already soiled. The saving of ten minutes is not so important, but it is also a saving of energy and gives just that much more chance to the housekeeper to do the things that she wants to do.

One housewife learned from her time chart that she used an average of more than six hours on routine tasks such as dishwashing, cleaning and food preparation, with but fifteen minutes spent on dressing and relaxation for herself. And she had no time at all for comradeship with her family of five children, and only forty-five minutes a day with her family at the table. It was very easy for her to see that she was keeping a house instead of a home.

So the story which the time chart tells warns the housekeeper where to improve her methods and where to spend what money she has for equipment. Often a great deal of time is lost in the course of the day's work by the use of unsatisfactory tools—like using a fork, for instance, instead of an egg-beater—merely because the worker has been careless about replacing worn-out equipment. And again a loss of time is caused by the

fact that the work things are arranged "back-handed" instead of in the way one naturally does the tasks, calling for a continual lifting and readjustment. Unnecessarily heavy pots and kettles waste a lot of time, especially if the children do a part of the work. And the inconvenient, poorly equipped kitchen is to the farm girl what the endless chores are to the farm boy —the chief impetus away from the farm and into the city job.

In general the most thought and most money for equipment should be expended upon two kinds of tasks: 1. Those which have to be performed every day or several times a day; 2. Those which are likely to cause overstrain or ill-health from other causes. In the first group are included the preparing of meals, clearing away and dishwashing, and the daily cleaning. For this reason, the farm women rightly place first in equipment the good range and oil stove and a running water system, as money spent there will pay larger dividends than anywhere else. The weekly washing seems most likely to cause ill-health by over-strain or exposure, so that good laundry equipment is also a prime necessity.

But even good equipment may still leave the housewife's work day far too long. Her next step is to so organize that some of the tasks are passed over to others. One farm woman writes me that her family uses the "carry system" in clearing the table. When the meal is finished, each person, visitors included, picks up his own dishes and carries them to the kitchen, thus saving her many steps. Sometimes the men of the family can give a few minutes' "lift" with the heavier tasks

after the noon meal, if the housekeeper has planned it for them. They can also take a little time off to help with the heavy work of wash-day.

Then the children can be taught to help with many of the lighter tasks, though the woman who drives herself is often inclined to think they are too much trouble. She is impatient and discourages them in their efforts by continual faultfinding. Of course the first time one teaches a young girl to bake a cake, it takes much more time and trouble than to bake it oneself. But it is a very shortsighted woman who does not train her children so that she can secure a permanent release from some of the lighter tasks. And the children will enjoy it if they can work along pleasantly with the mother to keep them company.

When I asked one farm woman what would be the most help to a young housekeeper in organizing her home work she laughed and said, "Well, I think that a real serious illness would do her more good than anything else." And I laughed, too, at this funny suggestion. Then she told me of her own experience. She came to her farm home as a bride, full of life and enthusiasm. None of the tasks seemed too hard for her. When she prepared a meal she flitted from kitchen to dining-room and back again, carrying a thing or two at a time, and was up and down the cellar stairs many times a day. When the older women criticized her wasteful methods she resented it, for she was so strong and well she saw no reason for saving steps. Yet she did feel abused because she never had any time for social pleasures as she had had before she married.

About that time she came down with a sudden illness. A serious operation was necessary, and after it months of recuperation. As the hired help was inefficient she took up her household duties again as soon as she could. But now, instead of wasting her energy at every turn, she must save it. She had the kitchen cabinet and the work table moved so close to the oil-stove she could reach them without moving from the high stool upon which she sat when cooking. Food when cooked was shoved across the narrow work table and served on a table behind a screen on the farther side. And everything about every little task was studied with a view to saving steps and energy. She saved up the heavier tasks for her husband to do in a short time morning and evening, and she left undone a hundred things that she had formerly considered necessary. She was continually surprised to see how smoothly she could run her household with so little strength.

And as she grew stronger she had the good sense to keep most of her invalid's program. "I just thought," she said, "that if a sick woman could run a house at all, a well woman ought to be able to run it with one hand." So she refused to return to a full time schedule, and as her strength returned, she found she had time every day for her garden and for social pleasures. "I discovered I had been abused," she laughed, "but that I had done most of the abusing myself, by my careless methods of work."

Of course no one would care to invite an attack of appendicitis for the sake of the time schedule, but it might be worth while to imagine oneself ill, just to see

how little one could do if necessary. To ask, "What would I do if I had only half my strength? And what would I leave undone?" The answer would require a thinking into things, and then some courage to make the changes that the thinking suggests. One is not lazy just because she gives much thought to making life easier for herself. Indeed she is often mentally lazy when she plods through the old routine without doing any thinking.

The settled housekeeper often fails to make changes to better methods and better tools because she does not give them a chance to prove themselves. When she tries a new way it goes awkwardly at first and she says, "If you call that saving time, I don't. It is harder than the old way." Of course it is. Any new habit is hard to establish, but if persisted in, it may make a great saving in the course of a year. Another says: "I can't be worrying about every step I take. It makes my work just that much harder." But she forgets that the new way will soon become as much second nature to her as was the other. A pianist struggles to learn the technique of the keyboard, but sooner or later she can turn it over to habit, and play without thinking at all of where her fingers are going. So the housekeeper must first master the technique of her work, then she will be free to think about other things. For there are just two ways to be efficient and happy in the daily round of monotonous tasks. One is to give the job real significance to you by thinking of its scientific side—or perhaps its aspect of service, which is its religious side. The other way is to learn to do the job so well that you

can do it as you think of something else, as when you button your shoes or brush your hair in the morning.

It all comes to this in the work of the farm home—at least according to the farm women who have been writing to me—the woman who works herself to death has herself to blame. If she persists in laying out for herself every day twenty-four hours' work to be done in a possible sixteen, she will always be worried and flurried, her family will be unhappy, from morning till night unfinished tasks will scream at her from every side, and drive her to an untimely grave. And the only thing one can do is to write as her epitaph—as was written for a self-driven housekeeper of old New England—"She hath done what she could n't!"

Food and Cleanliness

Three square meals a day are the rule in farm families in America, and to the home-maker they seem to come extremely close together. She has so little time to think or to plan the meals according to scientific standards of diet that it is little wonder that she sometimes gives up in despair and puts on the table whatever she thinks will "fill them up" with the least amount of work and trouble. And indeed most farm families, with their plentiful supplies of many kinds of food, have a fairly well-balanced diet. But the home-maker wishes to know definitely whether she is feeding her family on a properly balanced ration which will help them to make the most of their strength in the work of the farm day.

She knows that foods are different and that a proper diet would contain all the different kinds, but it is difficult to know how much of each should be used. Some foods are to furnish fuel to the body or energy to work with, while some build up the tissues and help the body to grow. Naturally grown people need more of the first kind and children more of the second kind of food.

One of the simplest classifications of foods divides them into five groups: Group I. Vegetables and fruits. Group II. Milk, meat, and meat substitutes. Group III. Grains, bread and breakfast cereals. Group IV. Sugars, syrups, jellies, candy, etc. Group V. Butter, cream, fat meats and other greasy foods.

The first two groups are body-building foods, and so are especially needed by children; the last two are energy or fuel foods needed by hard workers. And the third group is both, it is the "staff of life," and so is the chief group in most of our feeding plans for animals or for people. What the housekeeper needs to do is to make sure that no one of the groups is neglected when she plans her meals from day to day. More detailed information about the proportions of food is to be found in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1313 prepared by the Department of Agriculture.

The chief problem in securing a balanced ration for the country table is to have a sufficient supply of fruits and vegetables for the winter. But scientific methods of canning, and of storing vegetables and fruits render it possible to have a varied diet most of the year. Some of the extension workers have formulated four rules for

the use of fruits and vegetables for the average family. 1. Vegetables (other than potatoes and dried beans) twice a day. 2. Fruits twice a day. 3. Greens twice a week. 4. Oranges or tomatoes twice a week. To keep to such a program of food in the winter, the country cellar will need to be well stocked with vegetables, apples, canned fruit, greens and tomatoes.

The cooking of vegetables is important, also. Generally speaking, they should be cooked as little as possible to render them soft and palatable. Many people cook cabbage, for instance, until all its natural flavor is lost and then season it with meat. Usually the more one cooks cabbage, the worse it is for the cabbage—and the health of the person who eats it. The best way to serve it is with a simple cream dressing as slaw. When cooked, it is more digestible when served as soon as it is transparent and easily pierced with a fork. The same principle applies to nearly all vegetables, for they can all be "cooked to death" so far as their natural flavor is concerned.

The housewife's daily burden has been lightened somewhat in recent years by the fashion of simpler meals. It is no longer considered proper on most farms to serve half a dozen different vegetables at a meal, even if there is company. Two or three are chosen and the members of the family or guests are expected to eat the same things. The old fashion of serving everything at once, not only made a great deal of extra work for the housekeeper but also developed "finicky" habits of eating in children of the family. And by serving

fewer foods at a time and varying them from day to day, the family does not tire so quickly of the garden vegetables in their season.

The cost of food for the farm family may vary considerably, according to the amount of food raised on the farm. Some families, by means of carefully planned gardens and orchards and a home meat supply, need to buy very little of their food. Others, for the saving of labor and time, buy a great deal. Usually the food produced on the farm is much cheaper, even if there is a sale for it in the town, because the family gets it at its first cost of production. For instance, the farmer's own wheat or corn, ground at the local mill, and served as graham or corn-meal mush as a breakfast cereal, is very much cheaper than the prepared cereals on which he has to pay transportation charges, cost of manufacturing, cost of box, and all the middlemen's charges. In our own family, a favorite dish in the winter is whole wheat grains, which, after careful cleaning and washing, are cooked slowly on the back of the stove on ironing day, and served with cream as a breakfast cereal. Whole wheat has a delicious flavor which the broken grain does not have, and it is certainly inexpensive as compared with other breakfast cereals. Since cooking fat, whether bought or produced on the farm, is one of the most expensive of foods, it is wise to avoid frying food. And the home economics experts tell us that boiling and baking are better cooking methods for most foods, anyway.

A recipe file is a real help in cooking the more unusual dishes, because it saves thumbing through a big

cook-book every time one wants to do a little extra baking or other cooking. The favorite recipes are copied on cards which have a hole in the top, and the one needed can be slipped out and hung on a nail where it can be seen while one is doing the mixing. My own memory for proportions in recipes is so poor that I keep several cards on the nail all the time, shifting to the top the one I happen to be needing at the moment. File cards of one's favorite recipes can also serve as gifts to one's friends. I know a woman who sends them each year, with a bit of holly ribbon tied through the hole, instead of the usual Christmas cards.

The matter of cleanliness—clean house, clean clothes, clean hands, etc.—is another serious problem, and its solution takes a great deal of the housekeeper's time and energy in the course of the year. One of the greatest helps to cleaning is a good supply of water, so most farm women rank the running water system for the house as one of the most desirable conveniences. With the water coming in without effort and carrying out the dirt with it, the daily cleaning tasks are lightened indeed. Another step toward a clean house is to keep the dirt out as far as possible. For this reason, when there is a running water system, some housekeepers have an outside faucet near the door next the garden. There they wash and cut off the tops of the vegetables so that the dirt and litter is not carried into the kitchen at all. A stove-wood box which opens to the outside also saves a great deal of litter in the kitchen. And the farm home wash-room near the kitchen has become a real institution. It might be called the "cleanliness

room'' instead, for there the men can go to wash up before meals and to leave their dirty boots, all the family can brush their clothes, polish their shoes, and do all the other dirty tasks of the day's cleaning away from the living rooms of the family.

In the daily cleaning of the house, a good carpet sweeper picks up the surface dirt from the rugs and carpets with comparatively little dust. If electricity is available a vacuum cleaner is a great boon because it cleans the floor coverings so thoroughly that the constant stirring of dust by the children's feet is minimized. Light rugs which can be taken out of doors for cleaning, are also a help.

For the weekly laundry, the best possible equipment is desirable. Most housekeepers find it convenient to have a regular laundry room or a corner of the wash room fitted with cupboards for keeping the necessary soap powders and other supplies at hand. If there is a drainage system to carry off waste water from the house, funnel-top pipes can be run to the tubs, holes bored in the tubs and rubber stoppers inserted, so that the water need not be lifted after it has been used. If the tubs and ironing boards are of exactly the proper height for the worker, it will save much waste of energy. One farm woman says that her best help in ironing is a special ironing board about twice the usual width, on which she irons sheets, pillow cases and other flat things. A high stool on which to set the basket of clothes and a rack on which to spread the freshly ironed pieces without stepping away from the board will save a few steps for each garment. If there is electricity in the house,

a good electric iron makes a greater saving in time and energy than almost any other household convenience. A considerable saving in ironing, too, can be made by the proper choice of under-garments. Knitted underwear for all the family needs only to be pulled in shape on the line to be ready for wearing, and some of the children's dresss can be made of material which does not need ironing. Every detail of the work if planned carefully can be improved. Some women report that they have cut the time required for the weekly laundry almost in half by the use of better equipment and better methods.

The Home Bookkeeping

In pioneer days the farm family had few accounts to keep with the outside world, as almost everything produced was consumed on the farm, but now the household account is an important part of the home business and a great aid to economy. As John Ruskin once said, "Economy no more means saving money than it means spending money; it means the administration of a house; its stewardship; spending or saving, whether money or time, or anything else, to the best possible advantage."

The home account book need not be elaborate,—it may be only a ten-cent notebook ruled with bookkeeping columns. One farm woman says that she keeps a day-book and a ledger. The little daybook she keeps in her apron pocket where she can make a memorandum of buying and selling and money paid out for working ex-

penses—items which are set down in the evening in the ledger. She began keeping a record of her poultry, also, and her cows and calves, and other parts of her work. And in a short time she discovered many changes were desirable. The three cows were not paying for their keep, so she sold them and bought one high grade animal. Her poultry record led her to get rid of many of the older hens which had been unproductive. And she added to her hives of bees, which the account showed had been paying her well, and gave up trying to raise turkeys which had failed to pay expenses. And the account helped her to keep in mind the best places to buy satisfactory articles for the home and the most durable clothing.

The account book may also show how to save work. It may indicate that certain articles of clothing can be bought ready made as cheaply as they can be made at home. That buying certain fruits to can does not pay, and that soap-making is not worth the time and trouble. It may show that the farm woman could buy a washing machine with what she pays the laundress; could buy part of her bread ready baked without much increase in expense; could send the cream to the creamery and buy back the butter, and in other ways cut her daily work. In other words, it should show which parts of her work are really profitable and which are not.

The account will show, too, the comparative amounts of money being spent for food, clothing, repairs, amusements, etc., so that the homemaker can observe an unbalanced condition. In recent studies made by the Department of Agriculture of the expenditures of farm

families, the outlay for clothing runs about 15% of the total, for food about 45%, for health (doctor's bills, etc.,) 5%, and home operating expenses, 13%. One farm woman who has been keeping such accounts says: "This year I have a page for recreation, too. I want to make sure that we are getting the pleasure that we are entitled to in proportion to our income. I 'm planning to keep a list of half days off for picnics and outings to satisfy myself that farmers really do have vacations. We don't have two weeks off with pay, but we do have a lot of pleasures that we sometimes forget."

The household account leads the way to the making of the home budget, which is a plan for spending the income for the coming months. With the story of the past year's spending at hand, one can plan how much will probably be needed for food, how much for clothing, and so on, and on what one must economize most to keep the balance even. Someone has said a budget is "a method of worrying before you spend instead of after." And the keeper of the budget is not apt to be swept off her feet whenever a glib-tongued salesman comes along. She has in mind the amount of money she will probably have to spend, and definite things which she wants to spend it for. So she goes shopping with a well-set purpose, and a definite proportion in mind. We have all known families that spent so much for clothes they had little left for food, and others that bought a three thousand dollar automobile and then "could n't afford" a water system in the house. An automobile is nearly always a good investment for a farm family because it can be used for many purposes,

both for business and pleasure, but before buying it, one should consider it in relation to other family needs which may be quite as important. In my own experience on the farm, I have noticed that buying a new piece of equipment inevitably means going without something else that is also greatly needed. It is not a question of whether a convenience is desirable, but whether it is more desirable than something else. And ideas of desirability will vary greatly. Sometimes a farm woman asks me, "Which would you buy with the five hundred dollars we made from the farm this year—a water system or an automobile?" It is a question which I never answer, because no one can answer it for her. A water system will make her work lighter—but perhaps she would rather work harder and be able to get away from the farm for rides and visits. Or if the family decides upon the water system instead of the automobile, it may be that so much time will be released for profitable work that it will in time provide the automobile also. In any case, it is a balancing of accounts, which should be done carefully before the decision is made.

Farm Accounts

Many farm women manage the accounts for the whole farm, keeping the books, making the inventory, and footing up the farm profits for the year. They say that they can be a greater help to the overworked husband in this way than in any other. The Department of Agriculture has been working on systems of farm accounts which are

simple and easy to keep, and nearly all the state colleges sell farm account books of an approved type at cost. As the account books are arranged, they show the amount of labor income on the farm, the size of the farm business, the crop yields, and the return from livestock, as well as the amount of expense of different items. From this data the farmer can discover the weak and the strong points of the farm. Livestock growers particularly are appreciating the importance of producing a properly balanced livestock ration on the farm instead of purchasing feeds and of keeping a proper balance between the livestock and the field crops. And farmers generally are impressed with the need for more efficient farm management to combat the high costs of production and marketing prevailing at present. A well-kept account book is often the most profitable work of the farm. It saves misunderstandings at the elevator and the shipping station, keeps a record of bills paid, and of money owed to the farmer, and if a lawsuit is necessary, it becomes the best evidence of the farmer's business dealings. In many of the States the extension workers have organized cost-comparison conferences at which the farmers discuss their farm records. Discussions on costs are confined to particular crops, of course, so that no one need report his whole farm business.

The farm inventory or annual list of property is not difficult to keep up after it is once begun and it is of practical value in many ways. If progress is being made it accurately gages the extent of it and if not, it emphasizes the fact. So much of the income of the farm is immediately put back into the business that

often the farmer is discouraged and feels he is making nothing, when an inventory would show him better off than he thought. It shows additions to equipment, growth in livestock, gains in land value brought by good farming methods, etc. And in connection with the inventory, a computation should be made of the value to the family of the food, fuel, water, and use of the house, so that the farm business as it stands can be accurately judged. It is only by such bookkeeping with the farm that any farmer can tell whether he is a success or a failure.

The Woman's Business Career

Several of the farm women have asked me to speak strongly against the separate career for the woman on the farm. They say that she already has more than she can do if she keeps up with the housework and the children, and that work with the poultry, the garden, etc., should never be undertaken. Of course, they are right in saying that the farm woman has quite as much as she can do, without a business career of her own. But when one considers that in the past few years it has often been the woman's poultry work or other activity which has saved the farm mortgage from foreclosure, that her separate income has brought happiness and comfort to the home, and sent her children through college—one cannot entirely condemn it. It is a matter which rests with the farm woman herself and with her circumstances. A woman who loves the farm will work herself to death before she will see it go, and she will

do anything to gain advantages for her family. And if conditions force her to work for her living on the farm in addition to her household duties, it is deplorable, but at least she is no worse off than many a city woman. And she has the advantage of the city woman in that she can be near her family while she is doing it. Of course, no woman should overwork or neglect the finer sides of life unless it is absolutely necessary; it is always bad business in the long run, and she is very foolish if a mere ambition to "get ahead" drives her to neglect rest and recreation and her personal development. That kind of getting ahead is, in fact, the surest way to go backward.

But especially after the children are large enough to manage many of the household tasks, the farm woman may take a real delight in a special business of her own. It is an inspiring fad as well as a source of income, and a source of interest which keeps her alert and in touch with others doing the same kind of work. When it is possible, the work should be something one particularly likes to do and for which there is a fair market in the neighborhood or in a convenient city. Some women delight in vegetable growing, flower growing, fruit growing, ginseng growing, and other outdoor work. Others specialize on chickens, ducks, geese, or turkeys. Others who are interested in cooking put up jellies, jams, pickles, and canned fruits. Others make butter and cottage cheese. And still others prefer such indoor tasks as the making of "hooked" rugs, baskets, and the weaving of carpets or counterpanes. Whatever the task is, if it appeals to her, is fairly profit-

able and not too much for her strength, it may be a real pleasure. But she should always strive to become an expert in her specialty. Commonplace products in such small quantities seldom make a good profit. So she must appeal to the high-class trade from which she can exact a high-class price. Her pickles must be of such a superior quality that her customers will return eager for more. Her rugs and coverlets must have really artistic coloring and design. Her garden and fruit products must be more carefully graded and more attractively displayed, than any others on the market. In order to do this she must continually study her specialty in books and papers and the government bulletins and attend lectures by specialists so that no detail will escape her. And thus she becomes alert and open-minded and probably gets more out of life than she would without her specialty.

The handling of the money from the woman's special business is important. Too often it goes into the general household fund and by the end of the year neither she nor her husband knows how much she has made. The farmer may think that the woman's work does not amount to much, when he would be greatly surprised if he saw the proceeds. If possible all money from her special business should be kept by itself in a bank account of her own so that she can have a record of money drawn from it. As with the general farm accounting the woman's account with her specialty will show how efficient her methods have been, or how inefficient, and give her suggestions for changing to better methods or

to a different kind of work. Besides that, the sight of money actually coming in and being deposited in the bank is a great stimulant to endeavor—it is very hard to do one's best without seeing the money returns for the labor—and the specialty can be made to yield greater returns as its money value becomes apparent.

The handling of the bank account will also be an excellent training in business. Every woman should know how to open a bank account, how to write a check and fill out the stub which is her own record of the transaction, how to make out the deposit slip, to clip coupons, to buy bonds, to open a savings account, and all the other details of the handling of money. It may seem a simple matter but, as in other things, proficiency comes only with practice. And it is surprising how many women, suddenly thrown upon their own resources by the illness or death of their husbands, are entirely helpless in such matters. The woman needs also to decide upon her business signature, so that she will not sign her letters and checks sometimes Sarah Smith, sometimes Mrs. John S. Smith, and sometimes S. M. Smith, as careless women do. The old way of the housekeeper keeping her money in the cracked teapot is going out of fashion. Money about the house is too great a temptation to thieves. A bank account is a protection to one's money, and a convenience in paying bills, in keeping track of income and expenses, and in giving the depositor a claim to financial advice from the bank officers.

The Farm Name

The naming of the farm is very desirable from a business standpoint. If it is the policy of the farmer and his wife to sell a high class of products they should get the credit for it, and the only way for the products to become known outside a very small circle is to give the farm a name. It is good advertising. If the name is registered, no one else can use it under the law and it gives the products protection. Several States have laws which authorize the registration of farm names with the state authorities. One of the chief hindrances to the selling of products direct from the farm to the city customer is the city huckster who sells stale vegetables and fruits from the wholesale houses, yet pretends to be a farmer. So the city women learn to be wary of the "farmer" who comes to their doors. But if a man has a farm name which can be established with his customers, and always sells a high quality product, he will be protected from these impostors. Usually the farm name is descriptive—The Cedars, The Terrace, Maplewood, Broadlawn, Meadow Brook, etc., but any name which is distinctive is desirable. The farm name and address can be used upon a neat letterhead for business letters and upon stickers or stencils for marking packages of farm products. It is desirable, of course, when such a trademark is used, to make it stand for produce of the best quality. Some farm women grade all produce going to market and mark only the highest quality with the farm name in order to get the highest

price upon it. Products of poorer quality are sold unmarked at whatever they will bring.

Marketing

A great deal of the difficulty of marketing farm and garden products direct from producer to consumer is caused by the fact that neither quite understands the other's point of view. But if the producer of a specialized product is to succeed she must learn the city woman's attitude toward foods. For instance, it is often hard for the farm woman, who knows all about growing things and is used to seeing vegetables as they come from the patch, to realize that the city woman demands that they be graded in quality and size. For the city woman lives in a machine-made world. To her even food products must look as if they were all run in the same mold, and be an even quality, or she feels there is something wrong with them. She is used to paying a high price for food, but even if she gets a farm product at half the retail rate, she feels that a bad strawberry in the bottom of the box is a deadly insult. So the wise country woman in putting up her products makes them look as nearly machine-made as possible, keeping all the bunches of asparagus the same size and tied in the same way, closely grading the berries and vegetables in size and quality, and making sure that the outside of the package is a sure indication of the inside. Thus she can build up a high-class trade because her product has an unvarying quality.

In selling products direct from the garden, many

country people feel that the average city woman should be willing to pay a higher price because of the superior freshness of their vegetables, but she is not. There are a few discerning city women who will pay more for fresh products, but they are decidedly in the minority. The average woman is so used to vegetables and fruits handled by all the middlemen that she does not find their staleness objectionable, provided, of course, that they are not much wilted or decayed. She has lost that fineness of perception of flavor which the country person has. One farm woman told me an amusing story of her experience with a city friend. The country family had been delighting in a new variety of sweet-corn with a delicious flavor, but so fleeting that the children vied with each other in seeing how quickly they could get it from the garden to the dining-table. If it were kept over night its flavor was quite gone. So the country woman, going on a visit to the city, broke a basketful of the fragrant ears at the last moment, to give her city friend a taste of how delicious corn could be, and when she arrived urged her to put it in the pot at once. But the city hostess had other plans for dinner—and three days later the corn appeared on the table, the city family exclaiming at its delightful freshness.

And the city woman always expects to get farm products at a lower price from the producer than from the retail grocer. The ease with which she can call up the grocer and make one order for the day's supplies counts a great deal with her, and she feels she should pay less if she gets her vegetables and fruits from a roadside

store or even from the farmer's market. Many farm women have found that they must sell their products about five per cent. less than the retail price if they are to secure a good trade—this in addition to giving a highly standardized product. It often seems unfair to them, and perhaps it is unfair, but it is the natural effect of the machine-made city world.

The city woman seldom buys in large quantities except for a few staple supplies. Each day is a new beginning with her, and her food needs are taken care of by the morning grocery order or the morning trip to the market. So country women who have worked up a trade in baskets of mixed vegetables suitable to last the city family a week have found their city consumers preferring a smaller basket twice a week, chiefly because the city housewife is not used to planning her meals a whole week ahead. Because of these differences in the point of view, the woman on the farm who undertakes to sell the farm products will do well to talk frequently with her customers and to put up her wares in exactly the form which they demand, even though she may have to charge more for extra work involved in better grading and packing.

The Help Problem

A farm woman, when asked about conveniences needed for the farm home, said, "I think the greatest help would be a new hired man." And almost any one living in the country will quite agree with her. In the old days the hired man was usually the son of a neigh-

bor, who could be taken into the family as an equal, and who not infrequently married the farmer's daughter and established a home of his own. But now the neighbor's sons are off to the city and to well-paying jobs and in their places the farmer must take what he can get. It is a serious problem because of the demand for intelligence in laborers brought about by the increasing use of machinery and the need of expert help in producing and handling perishable products; yet the supply, at any price which the farmer can afford to pay, grows lower and lower in standards of living and intelligence. The present-day hired man at the family table has become a real menace to the standards of the children of the farm family, and many farm women are at their wits' end to know what to do about it. They feel that the solution of this problem would do more than anything else to emancipate the farm women.

Conditions vary greatly in different parts of the country, but one of the best plans seems to be to so manage the farm work that continual employment can be given two or three men all the year round. Then if comfortable houses and fair wages are provided, married men can be hired who will be more likely to remain than the unmarried workers, and who will not have to be with the farm children continually. Such workers usually cost more than the "picked up" worker for the summer, but their efficiency in handling the tools and stock is so much greater that they may be more profitable in the long run. In some communities the farmers have combined to build a house for their unmarried hired men, where the workers from several farms can

live apart from the farm families. The workers usually prefer this because they have more companionship. Foreign workers especially enjoy the society of those of their own nationality. Sometimes the migrant farm hand can board at the home of one of the permanent tenants. The best possible help should be secured, as the cheapest help on the farm is seldom profitable. The farmer cannot be with his workers at every moment and the lazy worker or the one with no initiative can easily cut his work to half what an efficient man would do. In any case, the women insist that it is necessary for the integrity of the farm home and the avoidance of overwork for the woman that the hired help be taken care of outside the home.

Hired help for the housework is becoming almost unknown on the farms of America and yet it is as necessary that the woman have assistance with the heaviest tasks while the children are little, as for the man to have help on the farm. Almost anything else should be given up for the sake of good help, when the help is needed. It is far better for the floors to be bare and the clothing ragged than that the children should lose a happy and healthy mother as their companion in after years. If regular help is out of the question, a worker by the day will lift some of the heaviest burdens, others can be lightened by better equipment, and perhaps still others can be taken care of by community effort.

CHAPTER VI

THE WOMAN HERSELF

"COUNTRY life is a delight to me the year around. My life is so full. I am a very busy woman. I don't see how any one could think of life on the farm as dull. There are always new interests, new and delightful surprises. I walk in the woods, I climb a hill, and get a different view of my home. I find a hidden spring. Then I follow a little stream around a hill. It is so beautiful. There is a vine and I plan to dig it up and plant it by the porch, and as it is always green it will give me joy all the year. The baby chicks, the shy little guineas, all the young growing things are new. Why, even my family are new to me when they come in after a day's absence in the field or at school. The school children broadcast the local news. There are lively and exciting happenings to be related, and their account is so vivid and clear I almost feel that I have seen the things they are relating," an Oklahoma farm woman writes me, and she has well expressed the thoughts of the country woman. City people are often surprised at the number of alert and well-groomed women at Grange picnics and other farmer gatherings, and remark about their fresh youthfulness. Few of them show their age as the city woman

does, in spite of all the beauty parlors can do for her, because they live simple and natural lives, and are seldom bored with anything.

The best cosmetic in the world is an active mind that is always finding something new and looking for something pleasant just around the corner. With such a woman indeed "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale her infinite variety," and even hard work cannot keep her down. A farm woman writes: "I have a work basket on the table by our radio receiving set. I always lay out work for the radio concerts. All the stockings are darned while I listen in. It is surprising how easy it is to mend and sew while listening to a concert, and it is more surprising to see the amount of sewing that has been accomplished in the concert hour." And she reads everything. A Massachusetts woman says: "We like fashion books and articles on proper table etiquette, too. Because we live on a farm does n't mean that we must necessarily confine our reading to chickens and fertilizer." In the old days, the mother often seemed to think that all her hopes were in her children, and that their good times and success or failure in life were all that mattered. Now she is beginning to see that her hopes for her children are not enough. They are to be trained and educated, of course, but still there are things which she can do that her children cannot. She has always carried a large part of the burden of the rural church upon her shoulders, and now the community work must often stand or fall according to the amount of time and energy she has to give to it. She has her own life to live every day of the year.

She feels a new independence toward the man of the family. In pioneer times the man was often the autocrat of the home, deciding from his own point of view every family question, and taking full responsibility for all its successes or its failures. The woman's own world existed at all, apparently, only when he was too busy with outside affairs to take a hand. There were exceptions, to be sure, and many a vigorous pioneer woman "ruled the ranch" in both her own and her husband's business; but tradition was strictly for the man as the head of the house, who decided matters for the wife as he did for the least of the children. But times are changing. Recently I have been reading many hundreds of letters from farm women in different periods, and it is interesting and a bit amusing, too, to note the change in their point of view. One large group of letters, for instance, was collected by the the Department of Agriculture in 1915. The women nearly all tell of the hard conditions of their lives and complain about the hard work imposed upon them, and the lack of opportunity for rest or recreation. "My husband looks after his horses and sees that they have proper rest," says a typical letter of this period, "but he never seems to think his wife needs a rest." It is the man who is to blame. She is his responsibility. And she, unconsciously perhaps, places herself on a level with the dumb brutes on the farm whose welfare must be looked after, because they are incapable of looking after themselves.

But later letters strike a different note. One farm woman writes emphatically, "I want to tell the world

that if any farm woman is overworked to-day, *it is her own fault!*" And hundreds of others voice the same sentiment in as many different phrases. Indeed, in only two or three letters among the thousands direct from the farm women of to-day do they lay the blame for their hard work upon their husbands.

I wonder sometimes in reading these recent letters where the old-time work-horse woman on the farm has gone. She seems as extinct as the dodo. Did she die of overwork? Did she move to the city in the recent exodus from the country places? Has she forgotten how to write letters voicing her complaints? Or has she, perchance, reformed, kicked over the traces, upset the wagon of tradition, taken the bit in her teeth and gone off on her own gait? Certainly the farm woman who has been writing me lately has been given her head—and uses it—and her complaints against her husband are few and far between. Even when conditions are at their worst, it is the grim necessity of poverty, community conditions, or economic conditions, and not the man who is to blame. And though a work-horse will sometimes go on till it drops dead under the lash, no self-respecting farm woman does nowadays. She assumes the responsibility for the effects of her overwork.

It is probable that much of this change has been brought about by education. Village high schools have become so numerous in nearly all of the States that most of the farm women have at least a high school education. A great many of them have been to college, and a surprising number have had superior training and the advantages of European travel. And all the women on

the farm read more widely than they used to, and keep up with general economic problems, so their understanding of the farm problem has grown considerably. The husband is no more a hard taskmaster to a helpless mate, but a man dealing with conditions as they are, as best he can. A farm woman in 1910 wrote of a mortgage on the farm, "I don't see what a mortgage is for, anyway, or why we have to have one." To her, apparently, a mortgage was a bogey ever ready to get her if she did n't watch out, and always keeping her from having the things she wanted. But the present day farm woman knows all about mortgages, and notes and interest and probable returns upon investments in land, and all the rest. She may hate the mortgage just as much because of its economic pressure, but at least she understands that it is not going to bite. In fact, in many cases the woman has been responsible for the mortgage because she has seen how an investment in tile drainage, orchards, barns, or some other farm project would pay big returns, and she is just as much interested in making sacrifices to pay it as her husband is.

The new woman on the farm is breaking with tradition in her own home work also. In years past most things were done because her mother and her grandmother did them in that way. Every custom of the family life was sacred whether it had any sense in it or not. So sometimes the really over-worked woman of the past was indeed "monst'ous busy" as Uncle Remus says of the Hard-headed Woman, but chiefly because "she done sech a heap er things she ain't got no business to do." That is, she was putting in much of her energy

upon things that her family would have been just as well off without, or perhaps even better off without. We may grow sentimental over the old-time cookery that "mother used to make," but if a woman on a modern farm were to serve pies three meals a day, as was often done in old times, she would rightly consider herself little better than an idiot. For she has learned from modern domestic science that, however pleasant they may be to the palate, pies are not the best form of food, and that in her work to make them she is really doing her family harm instead of good. So on the modern farm the pie has become a Sunday treat instead of an every meal necessity, and the fruit in season is served fresh or stewed upon the table.

Another tradition which the farm woman of to-day insists upon smashing is that against out-of-door work for women. Perhaps in this she is doing herself more harm than good, but at least she is doing it. Since the beginning in America, the self-respecting farmer has felt that his "women-folks" must not work outside. That was men's work and too hard for women. Apparently he thought that the weekly washing, scrubbing, baking and all the rest was but child's play in comparison. But the farm woman knew better, and since she has begun to rearrange her life somewhat, she is seeing that the old system often kept her at tasks far harder than those out-of-doors, without any of the benefits of fresh air, sunlight, and pleasant surroundings. She is now demanding a release from some of the indoor drudgery by machinery or coöperative effort or hired help, so that at least a part of her day can be spent at

outdoor work which is economically profitable. When the milk is sent to the creamery and the weekly wash to the coöperative laundry, she can take the children with her and spend the morning with her chickens or her raspberries and really enjoy herself. This gives her an opportunity to train her children in the outdoor work, also, which in the old days she never found time for.

The farm women insist that they do not lose caste by working outside, for outdoor work to one with courage and strength is uplifting, not degrading. Even the "idle rich" work out of doors to the very limit of their endurance, riding, boating, swimming, hiking, playing tennis or golf, or whatever it is they "go in for" at the moment. And certainly it ought not to be reprehensible for a farm woman to perspire over necessary and productive labor, when an equal amount of perspiration over fashionable sports is quite the thing! At least this is the opinion of all the women who have written me about the new arrangement. Of course if the breaking of the old American tradition should result in the women working the fields regularly as the European peasant women do, it would be unfortunate, but the American farmer and his wife are too sensible and have too wide an opportunity at other kinds of work ever to hitch the woman to the plow.

Rest

One of the findings of modern science which the farm woman has not taken entirely to heart, indeed she has had little chance to do so, is the necessity for rest periods.

The factory owner has learned from careful experiment that it is an economic loss to drive his workers too hard. So regular rest periods are established in the factory, and periods for play or recreation. It is a business proposition. And the rule is just as applicable to housework as it is to factory work. Any woman who actually works sixteen hours a day is undoubtedly working at a low rate of speed or energy. There are definite limits, as shown by modern science, to the working power of the human body. The person who works far into the night pays for it by being inefficient the next day. The body may go through the motions but the brain is dull and stupid. The work pushes the worker, instead of the brain pushing the work, and planning it efficiently. Indeed on the farm wherever you find blue, discouraged women, you will find them working late at night—and fit for nothing the next day. And nothing would be more helpful to country life than to bring the hours of labor down to a standard which would promote the greatest mental and physical efficiency in the woman on the farm.

The person who merely "keeps going," dragging herself from one task to another because she is afraid to stop, is injuring herself seriously, and there is no especial merit in keeping busy if one is not accomplishing anything, but being a martyr to a wrong cause. And the busy person really misses a great deal. She tries to get too much out of life, she has not time to be gracious to others, to give a pleasant word to the children or to think things out for herself. Some of the most strenuous workers scarcely use their minds at all, at least not

to think about important things and to enjoy the finer things of life.

Walt Whitman once said, "I loaf and invite my soul," and this is well worth doing. We have too much emphasized work in America, I sometimes think. We work and work, without ever stopping to think out for ourselves why we are working, or whether we are working in the best way, or what we are working for. For, though work is important, there is also that better part "which shall not be taken away." Even the serving of meals and the keeping of the house the Saviour considered less important. So the farm woman should stop occasionally from her physical exercise for spiritual exercise, to renew her faith and her courage; to sit down awhile in the garden and watch the plants grow, to watch the sunset fade out in the evening sky, and to take a little walk with herself at night under the stars. She is a fine woman—this American country woman—and it is well worth her while to get acquainted with herself.

Some of the farm women say that getting away from home, seeing other people's homes and eating food they have not cooked does them more good than anything else in the world. No one with a reasonably active mind ever goes on a visit without bringing something worth while home with her. Even if it is only a new way of cooking eggs, or a new way of doing her hair, it varies the family life by so much. And it keeps the woman's brain active and on the job for a considerable period afterwards. The city office worker is given a vacation because her employer knows that she will be

worth more to him in the course of the year with a vacation than without it. So the woman whose work keeps her much at home is really adding to the amount she can accomplish by taking time off occasionally.

Care of the Person

The farmer with pure-bred stock is careful to keep his fine animals well cared for, not merely because of an impression their appearance may make upon the chance visitor, but also because a fine animal thrives better if it is given special care. And yet the woman, busy with many things through the day, sometimes neglects her personal needs, though a little attention given to herself might help her to carry the day's load.

One country woman tells me that she has kept young looking and pretty in spite of heavy work by devoting half an hour to her appearance every night. She says she saves that time for herself as religiously as she gets breakfast or feeds the chickens in the morning, because she thinks it is just as important. First she takes a bath or washes her face and neck thoroughly, cleans her teeth with a pleasant dentifrice, brushes out her long hair and shakes it about for a few minutes before she braids it for the night. Then she bathes the tired feet she has been standing on all day, rubs them with witch-hazel and massages her feet and swollen ankles thoroughly, rubbing a little vaseline between the toes and over the corns. By the time she is through, her feet are glowing and rested. Next she rubs her face

and neck with cold cream with a gentle upward motion, and rubs the cream thoroughly into her hands. The use of the greasy cream is to return to the skin the oil lost by exposure to wind, dust, and water during the day. In summer she also bathes her face in an astringent lotion. As a final preparation for rest, she does a few stretching exercises to get all the "cricks" out of her body and she is ready to slip into a clean nightgown, say a brief prayer, and go to sleep without a care in the world. For it is a fact that a little leisurely attention to the body before going to bed is the most relaxing and restful thing that one can do.

In the morning when she must hurry out to get breakfast, she needs but a moment to dash cold water over her face and to do her hair to be ready for the day's work. Some women also shake out their hair and brush it when they lie down for a while in the afternoon, or failing this, leave it hanging while they go about the poultry work or gather the vegetables, so that it is well aired and sunned every day. And a "good stretch," a few minutes' rest on the sitting-room sofa, and a change to fresh stockings and shoes are recommended as good ways to shake off weariness at any time in the course of the day's grind.

The greatest difficulty for the woman on the farm is to keep her hands in good condition, as her work brings her in contact with many things which hurt the skin. Gloves can be worn for some tasks and two or three pairs of loose cotton gloves should be ready for use at any moment. The use of dishmops and of a soapshaker

in washing dishes saves the hands from hot water, and very often with a little practice a spoon or scraper can be used for tasks for which the hands have been used before. Near the kitchen sink should be kept a small bottle of vinegar to be used after the hands have been in hot water, a bottle of glycerine to soften them when they become rough and chapped, and a box of corn meal to sprinkle on with the soap when they are very dirty. The meal will soften them and cleanse them at the same time. Other good treatments are vaseline rubbed well into the skin after the day's work is over, and mutton tallow with a little sulphur added is healing and whitening. It is not mere vanity which leads a worker to take care of her hands. They are her best working tools. If they are neglected, they will in time become stiff and rough and awkward, she will lose her deft touch with fine china and flowers and the other dainty things about the house, and all her work will be done with less freedom.

To be really good-looking, a woman must have well-cared for hair and arrange it in a becoming way. It is an imposition on one's family and the general public to give one's hair but "three licks and a promise," and drag it back into a grim knot at the back of the head, even if one is a very busy woman. There are many ways of making the hair frame and soften the face becomingly without taking a great deal of time in its arrangement, and she is a foolish woman indeed who neglects to make the most of her crown of glory. As the old Roman, Ovid, said some two thousand years ago:

Let neatness be your chiefest charm
And see your hair is well arrayed,
One touch succeeds and one does harm,
Not every style suits every maid.
Choose yours and in the mirror glance
Till you achieve true elegance.

Dress

The quaint and colorful peasant costumes of the European nations have their charm and I dare say the women who wear them enjoy it, but no American country woman has any desire to be thus set off in a class by herself by her clothes. Clothes do make a great deal of difference. Henry Ward Beecher said, "Clothes do not make the man but they make him look a lot better after he is made." And certainly this is very much more apparent in the woman. The desire of the American country woman is to dress so much like her city sisters that she can mingle in the city crowds without an added glance in her direction, except perhaps for the vigor of her step, the clear brightness of her eyes and the natural healthful color of her complexion.

And the only way to look exactly like the city woman is to wear exactly the same kind of clothes, not necessarily clothes as elaborate or as costly, but well-made clothes with the same good lines and perfect tailoring. For this reason many of the farm women whom I know buy their best clothes by mail from the shops on Fifth Avenue, New York, rather than from the local stores or the general mail-order houses which cater particularly to the country trade. They buy, perhaps, a simple con-

servative suit, well tailored and cut, a dainty waist, and a becoming hat. Or sometimes they prefer a modish long coat, with a simple dark silk dress to wear under it, as being more generally useful. They pay more, probably, than they would at the local stores, but if the clothes are well chosen they do not go out of style so rapidly and the consciousness of being well-dressed is worth a good deal. They find that one such outfit will serve their needs for a long time, with the addition of simple wash dresses which they can make themselves, and the occasional trip to the city has no terrors for them, so far as clothes are concerned. If they cannot afford these more expensive clothes, they choose the simplest suits in the local stores and add a lace-trimmed home-made waist for daintiness.

With the best outfit, they wear neat black or brown shoes, with silk stockings for parties and the trips to town. Cotton stockings are more sensible for general country wear because they are not damaged so easily by briers and weeds. Indeed they are sensible enough for any kind of wear—but who wants to be sensible to the extent of wearing cotton stockings when every other woman is wearing silk! So the farm woman believes in indulging in a few, at least, of the luxuries of life, even though the field of her work makes her reserve them for the state occasions!

The Home Demonstration agents have been arousing an interest in home dressmaking by teaching how to make individual dress forms of gummed paper strips upon which the farm woman can fit her own clothes. Though a dress form is by no means so essential in these

days of chemise frocks as it was when every line of the figure was fitted, it is a help in adjusting the sleeves and shoulder seams, collars and other trimming. In fact, dress-making has become such an easy task, comparatively, in this era of simple clothes that almost any one can make really stylish garments with the help of a good pattern. Even trimming has been almost done away with, except for collars and vests of contrasting material and touches of hand-work which can be done at home very easily. In my own experience, I have usually found that the attempted saving in adapting the same pattern to different types of clothes was not a success. Each pattern is cut for a certain type of material and a certain type of dress, and its use for other purposes is apt to be disappointing. Of course, many house-dresses can be cut from the same pattern, with variations in trimming and color, and children's dresses can be made just alike in a whole rainbow of colors for variety. But for important frocks, it is wise to choose carefully a pattern as nearly fitted to the material and the type of dress as possible, and depend upon it to give the garment style and fit. And the pattern should always be a brand-new style, which has been featured in a recent issue of the pattern magazine. The large books of patterns often continue to carry styles which are months or even years out of date, and the thoughtless purchaser is likely to be disappointed in the finished garment.

Another help given to the home sewing by the Demonstration agents is to form local classes for instruction in general sewing, seam finishes, making flower trimmings,

decorative stitches, and the making over of old clothing. This last is particularly important in a home where there are a number of small children. In other places the agents teach the making and trimming of hats and give good advice concerning the type of hat best suited to the individual. Sewing machine experts are brought into some communities to teach the women how to keep their machines at the highest point of efficiency. There are also many excellent bulletins on sewing prepared by the State colleges of agriculture and the Department of Agriculture, so that no country woman need be without the knowledge of how to make pretty and stylish clothes for herself and the children.

A great deal has been written and said about how to choose clothes for beauty and becomingness, but except for a few very general principles, it does not give one much real assistance. Of course the large woman needs to choose dark colors which blend into the background, avoid large figures and bright-finished materials, and emphasize the long lines of her dress. And the very thin woman may indulge in many soft frills and crosswise tucks, and big collars which hide the thinness of her chest. But aside from this, each person is a separate problem. No one can tell her exactly what clothes she will enjoy, and often she does not know, herself, until she has tried them. One farm woman solved the problem by keeping to similar lines in her clothes. After she had once found a dress that she felt her best in and that all her friends said was becoming, she chose the next one somewhat like it in general style, though perhaps very different in color and trimming. As the type

of dress was really well suited to her figure, she always looked well wherever one saw her.

Not less important than the dress are the accessories. Good-looking gloves, hat, and shoes, and a bit of real lace have given many a common-place dress a real distinction. Fortunately even the dressier shoes can now be had with comfortable heels and in hats the woman can choose a large one or a small one as she sees fit. Many farm women prefer a hat with a drooping brim to shade the face and soften its lines, trimmed with a few simple flowers or feathers. But nothing is better with a suit or tailored coat than a trim little tailored hat, softened a little by the curve of the brim and framing becomingly the face of the wearer. A hat should always be put on with the dress with which it is to be worn, and studied carefully from both sides and the back as well as from the front before it is finally decided upon. Even a pretty woman cannot wear "just anything," because some lines will surely accentuate her good points more than others will, and the sharp-featured woman should give the buying of a new hat the greatest care and consideration. For indeed there is a real magic that lies in the lines of millinery, and whatever the type of her face, no woman can afford to overlook it.

This whole question of clothes is important to the farm woman. William James once said that "the old saying that the human person is composed of three parts—soul, body and clothes, is more than a joke." Whether you like it or not, the people you meet take your clothes as an expression of your individuality.

They cannot see the real "you" inside, who may be very merry and gay—the "you" they are seeing is the outside, which may be largely made up of an old brown dress that would make a shining saint look dejected. There are a few women whose personality so dominates their clothes that they look nice in anything, but for most of us it is almost impossible to be ourselves unless we are arrayed in a fairly becoming garment. It may be only the old blue gingham that we wear about the work, but if it is the right shade and the touch of white at the neck is becoming, we feel that we are ready to face the whole world.

CHAPTER VII

THE BOY AND THE GIRL

TO be a farm child is the happiest fortune in the world. Every one who was farm born can well recall those dewy mornings in the country when the air is so fresh and the sun so bright that the farm children rise twittering like little birds, jump into their clothes and run gaily across the lawn for the very joy of living—returning breathless and beaming and hungry to the family breakfast table, but so eager to be off to the great concerns of their play that they can hardly take time to finish the meal. And all the day long they are as busy as bees, sliding down the hay, playing in the carpenter shop, building a dam across the brook to turn a watermill, climbing trees, hunting the hens' nests, hitching up the calves, playing hide and seek, or earnestly building a fort to stand strong and firm against imaginary Indians.

Though child playmates may be few there are always the pet lambs, the curly-tailed pigs, the colts, the calves, the chickens and ducks and turkeys, the farm dog and the furry kittens, besides all the wild things of the woods and fields and treetops to give them companionship in their play. They are too busy and happy ever to feel lonely even in the long summer days. It

is no wonder that they think that the home farm is the finest place in the world. But though farm life for children has its many joys and advantages, it also has its disadvantages, as every farm woman knows. And it is the task of the farm woman to make this best place for children even better, so that they can realize themselves in every possible way. She wants her children to be healthy and normal, growing and well-fed, good, intelligent, loving and industrious, for all these things are necessary to their future happiness.

A well-grown, rosy-cheeked farm child is the most wholesome creature in the world. He is not only in a state of present health, but he is building up a strength of constitution which will stand him in good stead in his after years under the strain of a strenuous life, of wounds or severe illnesses. Herbert Hoover said in a recent talk before the American Child Health Association: "The farm boy stores up vigor and acquires resourcefulness, from his life in the open and his direct coöperation with Mother Nature, which gives the battle to his hands when he tackles the city-bred boy on the latter's own ground. . . . There is a subconscious perception of all this in the minds of city folk, as may be seen in the fact that, after a generation or two of city life, they feel the urge to get back to the country. Life in the country is the only thing to keep them fit for work in the city."

Yet unfortunately not every country child is physically strong enough to enjoy all the benefits of country living. Either because of some physical defect or of some fault in his way of life, he is not "free to gain,"

as the doctors say, and he grows up pale and listless and ill-nourished in spite of all that sunlight and fresh air and country life can do for him. Many of the figures given out as to the comparative health of city and country children even indicate that physical defects and malnutrition are more common in the country than in the city. Most such figures, it seems to me, give a very false impression of the healthfulness of the real country districts, because they include children living in villages and towns up to 1,000 population, in which health conditions are frequently much worse than in the city or the open country. Actual figures on the country districts alone, would, I think, show that country children are on the whole healthier than city children.

But the actual number of children below the average of health does not matter much. We country people want every boy and every girl to be above the average, and the boys and girls of our own families we want to be as abundantly healthy and well-grown as any prize calf or colt at the fair. We no more like to raise runts of boys and girls than we like to raise runty calves or pigs on our farms. It is bad business. And yet until recently, though the government had taken great care for raising the average of farm animals, little help has been available to the country woman in raising the average of farm children. Fortunately, there are now obtainable from your Congressman many excellent bulletins and booklets on child care and training, written by some of the foremost experts of the nation. The American Child Health Association of New York City pro-

vides delightful booklets, suitable for reading by the children themselves, and many of the State governments give advice to fathers and mothers about the care and training of their little ones. In fact, there is now no excuse for any one not having at hand the best that is known to-day about the rearing of vigorous children.

One of the first things to find out about a child is its present state of health and growth. And this is not easy to judge unless one sees it often with other children of the same age. The mother becomes so used to looking at the undersized child that she sometimes thinks it is merely "slow of growth" when it is in reality being stunted by some physical defect. Many country families have a "measuring corner" somewhere in the house with two yardsticks or a new tape-measure tacked neatly upon the wall, and a chart for keeping a record of the weights and heights of the children. Some families make this checking up on growth a sort of ceremony at each child's birthday, but to secure health results it should be done much more frequently than that. The following weight-height-age tables for girls and boys were prepared by Bird T. Baldwin, Ph.D. and Thomas D. Wood, M.D.

Stand the child, without shoes, against the measuring scale on the wall and place a light wooden box on his head and against the measuring scale, chalk his height, and enter the figures on the chart. For his age take the nearest birthday. Then find the height in the left column and follow across the chart to the proper age column. The figure given there will tell what this child should weigh. Then weigh the child without shoes or

BOYS

Height (*in.*)	5 *yrs.*	6 *yrs.*	7 *yrs.*	8 *yrs.*	9 *yrs.*	10 *yrs.*	11 *yrs.*	12 *yrs.*	13 *yrs.*	14 *yrs.*	15 *yrs.*	16 *yrs.*	17 *yrs.*	18 *yrs.*	19 *yrs.*
38	34	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
39	35	35	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
40	36	36	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
41	38	38	38	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
42	39	39	39	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
43	41	41	41	41	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
44	44	44	44	44	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	46	46	46	46	46	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
46	47	48	48	48	48	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
47	49	50	50	50	50	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
48	—	52	53	53	53	53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
49	—	55	55	55	55	55	55	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
50	—	57	58	58	58	58	58	58	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
51	—	—	61	61	61	61	61	61	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
52	—	—	63	64	64	64	64	64	64	—	—	—	—	—	—
53	—	—	66	67	67	67	67	68	68	—	—	—	—	—	—
54	—	—	—	70	70	70	70	71	71	72	—	—	—	—	—
55	—	—	—	72	72	73	73	74	74	74	—	—	—	—	—
56	—	—	—	75	76	77	77	77	78	78	80	—	—	—	—

BOYS

Height (*in.*)	5 *yrs.*	6 *yrs.*	7 *yrs.*	8 *yrs.*	9 *yrs.*	10 *yrs.*	11 *yrs.*	12 *yrs.*	13 *yrs.*	14 *yrs.*	15 *yrs.*	16 *yrs.*	17 *yrs.*	18 *yrs.*	19 *yrs.*
57	—	—	—	—	79	80	81	81	82	83	83	—	—	—	—
58	—	—	—	—	83	84	84	85	85	86	87	—	—	—	—
59	—	—	—	—	—	87	88	89	89	90	90	90	—	—	—
60	—	—	—	—	—	91	92	92	93	94	95	96	—	—	—
61	—	—	—	—	—	—	95	96	97	99	100	103	106	—	—
62	—	—	—	—	—	—	100	101	102	103	104	107	111	116	—
63	—	—	—	—	—	—	105	106	107	108	110	113	118	123	127
64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	109	111	113	115	117	121	126	130
65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	114	117	118	120	122	127	131	134
66	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	119	122	125	128	132	136	139
67	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	124	128	130	134	136	139	142
68	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	134	134	137	141	143	147
69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	137	139	143	146	149	152
70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	143	144	145	148	151	155
71	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	148	150	151	152	154	159
72	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	153	155	156	158	163
73	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	157	160	162	164	167
74	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	160	164	168	170	171

GIRLS

Height (*in.*)	5 *yrs.*	6 *yrs.*	7 *yrs.*	8 *yrs.*	9 *yrs.*	10 *yrs.*	11 *yrs.*	12 *yrs.*	13 *yrs.*	14 *yrs.*	15 *yrs.*	16 *yrs.*	17 *yrs.*	18 *yrs.*	19 *yrs.*
38	33	33	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
39	34	34	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
40	36	36	36	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
41	37	37	37	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
42	39	39	39	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
43	41	41	41	41	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
44	42	42	42	42	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45	45	45	45	45	45	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
46	47	47	47	48	48	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
47	49	50	50	50	50	50	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
48	—	52	52	52	52	53	53	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
49	—	54	54	55	55	56	56	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
50	—	56	56	57	58	59	61	62	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
51	—	—	59	60	61	61	63	65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
52	—	—	63	64	64	64	65	67	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
53	—	—	66	67	67	68	68	69	71	—	—	—	—	—	—
54	—	—	—	69	70	70	71	71	73	—	—	—	—	—	—

GIRLS

Height (*in.*)	5 *yrs.*	6 *yrs.*	7 *yrs.*	8 *yrs.*	9 *yrs.*	10 *yrs.*	11 *yrs.*	12 *yrs.*	13 *yrs.*	14 *yrs.*	15 *yrs.*	16 *yrs.*	17 *yrs.*	18 *yrs.*	19 *yrs.*
55	—	—	—	72	74	74	74	75	77	78	—	—	—	—	—
56	—	—	—	—	76	78	78	79	81	83	—	—	—	—	—
57	—	—	—	—	80	82	82	82	84	88	92	—	—	—	—
58	—	—	—	—	—	84	86	86	88	93	96	101	—	—	—
59	—	—	—	—	—	87	90	90	92	96	100	103	104	—	—
60	—	—	—	—	—	91	95	95	97	101	105	108	109	111	—
61	—	—	—	—	—	—	99	100	101	105	108	112	113	116	—
62	—	—	—	—	—	—	104	105	106	109	113	115	117	118	—
63	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	110	110	112	116	117	119	120	—
64	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	114	115	117	119	120	122	123	—
65	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	118	120	121	122	123	125	126	—
66	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	124	124	125	128	129	130	—
67	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	128	130	131	133	133	135	—
68	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	131	133	135	136	138	138	—
69	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	135	137	138	140	142	—
70	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	136	138	140	142	144	—
71	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	138	140	142	144	145	—

heavy coat and write down the weight. All this takes only a few minutes and the result will give a good idea of where the child stands in health-land. For when you use a chart in this way it is as if you were standing each child up with hundreds of other children of his own age and comparing them. Some of them will be much above the average, of course, in height and weight, and some below—but you will want your own child to be at least better than the average, and, if possible, as good as the very best. Then you can, indeed, be proud of him. In fact, these score cards for children are very similar to the score cards used for cattle and horses. They provide a standard by which a prize child can be distinguished from a scrub child. And certainly every woman on the farm should check up on her children's growth as carefully as her husband does on his pure-bred livestock. Perhaps in the future at the country fairs we shall see rosy-cheeked boys and girls exhibited for prizes as the farm animals are now, and lectures given on growing and judging prize children.

If any one of the children is much underweight, it is wise to look for the cause, so that it can be removed and he can catch up with his fellows. It does not do to put it off, because development lost at one point in his growth can never be entirely caught up later. Every farmer knows that if he wants his pigs to do their very best, they must begin to grow the minute they are born and keep growing steadily. It is bad business to let them get puny and run-down for any reason—especially if he hopes to have them take the prize at the fair. So a run-down child will never quite "outgrow it." First

the child should be examined by a doctor to find any possible physical defect that is stunting his growth. If there is no such defect, then it is likely that either his health habits or his food is at fault, or both. A very active, nervous child in the country will often "run off" much weight by his intense activity, and such a child is also likely to have peculiar tastes in food and to eat too rapidly. His weight may increase if he is required to rest or play very quietly for an hour every afternoon, is not allowed to leave the table before the rest of the family is through, and is taught that drinking milk and eating vegetables will make him big and strong. Many a small boy has begun to drink milk because he has been told that Jack Dempsey always drinks quantities of milk when he is in training. And a child who gets his regular quart of milk each day will nearly always make the proper gain in weight.

The following health rules for children have been compiled by the National Child Health Council:

1. Eating three warm, wholesome meals regularly each day, with no candy or other sweets between meals. Sitting down to eat, chewing food thoroughly, eating slowly.
2. Every day eating some fruit and two or three vegetables, including one green or leafy vegetable. At every meal eating some whole grain bread or cereals.
3. Drinking at least one pint of milk each day, but no tea or coffee.
4. Drinking at least three, or preferably, four glasses of water every day.
5. For children of four or five sleeping at least twelve hours each night, well covered, with the bedroom windows

open wide, and a midday rest. For older children ten hours' sleep.

6. Devoting all leisure hours to play out of doors. When weather does not permit going out of doors, playing indoors with windows open. (Children should have at least two hours of play in the fresh air every day.)

7. A natural bowel movement every day—in the morning preferably.

8. Brushing the teeth at least once a day, especially before going to bed.

9. A full tub or sponge bath at least once a week.

10. Washing the hands before eating.

11. Always carrying a handkerchief and being careful to protect other people by holding it over the mouth and nose, and bowing the head when coughing and sneezing.

The insistence upon all these things may seem unnecessary in the country, but it is not. Even though some health conditions are better on the farm, the shortage of country doctors and hospitals available for country people renders it imperative that the children learn every possible safeguard to their health. The health problem in the country is largely a matter of prevention of disease rather than of its cure. That the establishment of personal health habits has been neglected by both city and country parents was shown during the World War when the army draft revealed the lack of training of the young men. One in every four was quite unfit for military service, and few of the others knew even the simplest principles of personal hygiene. And it is largely a result of the realization of this state of affairs that so much emphasis is now being

placed upon good health habits for everybody. Of course, no child will establish a habit unless it is watched carefully every day, but the extra time required is well repaid later in his better health and greater ability to look out for himself. Merely to make him keep the health rules is not enough—the child himself must become interested, and the regular monthly weighing and checking up on the weight chart is the best way to get him into the game of building up his strength.

Play

Play out of doors in the fresh air and sunshine is just as important in the country as in the city, and every child should have at least two hours for play every day. This does not mean sitting down play, either, but active games which will develop all the muscles of their bodies equally, overcome any ill effects of the work which they are required to do, and give grace and self-possession.

Sometimes the small child in the country gets too little fresh air because it "tags around" after the mother at her work all day long. Yet she cannot trust it to the care of thoughtless older children or have it out of her sight. So the little country child needs its own sandbox, swing, and toys in view of the kitchen windows where it can amuse itself and still be under the mother's supervision. For the older children some simple, home-made gymnasium apparatus set up in the back yard will give them exercise much less dangerous than the tree-climbing and other feats which farm children usually undertake. And the development of good

muscular control will often save them from serious accidents in the work and play of the farm. Games with balls are always fun in the country and are particularly good for grace and general development. If there are several children in the family simplified forms of volley ball, base-ball, basket-ball, and tennis can be played, with "catch" or "pass" for the very little children.

One of the outstanding traits of the country-bred person is his individuality. He is not cut by a machine-made pattern, as the city person often seems to be. He can be himself truly and that without encroaching upon the rights of those around him. And the development of this originality is of great importance. Its growth begins in the freedom of the child in his play, and develops through his passionate interest in "fads," upon which the older folk look with kindly tolerance if not with real appreciation. Who would take away from the country child the joy of collecting—anything? And what country-reared person would like to lose his memories of the busy hours spent over many an absorbing project of his own? There is his collection of Indian relics—arrow-heads and pipes and tomahawks and bits of chipped flint—gathered from miles about with as intense a scientific passion as that which led to the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen. Like the archeologist, from these bits of fashioned stone he has reconstructed in his imagination the life of a bygone age. Its people have become real to him, they live and love and make war and vanquish their enemies. And never in all his life to come is pioneer and Indian his-

tory dead stuff to the child who has had such a collection.

And the country boy's string of birds' eggs—which we now deplore because of its wastefulness—was an education in itself. In his passion for collecting as many kinds of eggs and as fine specimens as possible he learned the secrets of all the treetops, the nesting habits of many kinds of birds and their general characteristics, besides getting a thorough training in agility and resourcefulness in his efforts to secure his specimens. After that a bird was never a mere bird to him. It was a robin or a bluebird or a wren, and his interest in natural life had been lifted as high as the treetops at least. In a similar way his stamp collection gives a glowing zeal for geography, a collection of stones opens the door to geology, his love for hunting leads him to study the habits of the shy wild things of the woods and fields, and his collection of pets gives him plenty of exercise for all the responsibility and ingenuity of which he is capable.

But it is not enough merely to tolerate these childish enthusiasms. The wise farm parents see in the children's fads an opportunity for leading them into the fields of science and literature, and deliberately cultivate their interest in the things around them. When the boy becomes interested in Indian lore the way is made easy for him to fill in the outlines of his imaginative picture, by suggesting that he buys books about Indians and pioneer history, and by telling him the stories of Daniel Boone and David Crockett and all the other

picturesque pioneer folk. And he can be led to ask questions of the old people of the neighborhood, who remember some of the incidents and the customs of the old days, and through their tales of old times he will gain a respect for age and its wisdom which he could gain in no other way. A boy who has once sat open-mouthed at his grandfather's rendition of the stories of pioneer and Indian days will never think his grandfather an old fogy. He will see the vigor and the heroism of his life and long to emulate it in his own.

And instead of allowing the boy and girl to collect birds' eggs and so destroy what Nature has given them, the modern woman on the farm turns their eager interest to conserving the natural life. And by teaching them a love for the country, she opens their eyes to natural science at an early age. The great naturalist, John Burroughs, once wrote: "Some people seem born with eyes in their heads, and others with buttons on painted marbles, and no amount of science can make the one equal to the other in seeing things. . . . Even the successful angler seems born and not made; he appears to know instinctively the ways of trout. The secret is no doubt the love of the sport. . . . The eye sees what it has the means of seeing, and its means of seeing are in proportion to the love and desire behind it. . . . You must have the bird in your heart before you can find it in the bush." So the country mother tries to give her child the bird in its heart, first of all, and then to lead it to the study of birds in the bush.

Bird migration is one of the greatest wonders of the

world of nature. There are many things about it that nobody understands. Why do they travel at night? Why do they go such great distances when shorter ones would apparently do as well? How can they time their journeys so that they arrive at almost the same date year after year? And the child who becomes interested in keeping a bird "log" or diary will have the thrilling experience with each returning spring of checking up his feathered friends and watching for their return. April and May are the best months for bird study. Then the feathered tribe is at its best as it comes up from the South with sleek spring costumes of bright colors. They are then full of song, restless and eager to be away to field, forest and mountain to begin the work of nest-building. In the eastern United States the procession of the returning birds begins early with the coming of the purple grackle and others of the blackbird family and ending with the great flocks of the chimney swift from far off Argentine. It is most interesting to climb to the top of a hill at night during the spring migration and listen to the "honk! honk!" of the wild goose, the whistle of the killdeer, and the squeak of the night-hawk during the evening hours. Longfellow wrote of them:

Above, in the light
  Of the starlit night,
    Swift birds of passage wing their flight
Through the dewy atmosphere;
  And I hear the cry
    Of their voices high,
Falling dreamily through the sky.

To be equipped to learn all the birds of the farm the young enthusiast needs only a good bird book or bird guide with colored pictures which he can compare with the birds as he sees them, and a small notebook in which to write down their names. He tries to learn the names of the birds, learn their ways and watch them at their nesting time, and continually to add to his store of knowledge about them. A good pair of opera or field glasses is helpful in bird study, but by no means necessary, as the children can learn the Indian art of slipping up noiselessly to make their observations. In the winter they can keep up their interest by reading about birds or using their knowledge in school work, in feeding the winter birds, and in building simple bird houses to be placed in the trees to attract birds the following spring.

The study of birds may not seem very necessary to the success of the farming operations, but the scientists have shown that it is extremely important. Nearly all the birds are helpful in keeping down insect pests, and often the orchards and fields of the bird lover are noticeably freer from injurious insects than those of his neighbors who make no effort to keep the birds around them. The Biological Survey of the Department of Agriculture has reported that sixty-six kinds of birds of the Southeastern States feed upon boll weevils and every orchard has its army of bird protectors without which it could produce little sound fruit. Indeed it is only a matter of encouraging the birds and protecting them from their enemies to keep in check many of the

worst of the farm insect pests. And who is so ready and eager for such service as the children on the farm?

The little wild folk of the woods and fields can be studied in the same way, though a guide-book is not so necessary for them. Books on the lives of the animals, however, like Ernest Thompson-Seton's "Wild Animals I Have Known," should be in every country child's library. And he should be encouraged to observe the actions of the animals he meets as he goes about the farm and to report what he sees for the benefit of the family. No child who has ever seen a fox slipping through the trees, a groundhog or a prairie-dog digging a hole, a squirrel busily storing away nuts for winter, a skunk daintily mincing down the path, or a raccoon washing its food in the brook, will ever forget it, and such observations will form the basis of much of his later learning. Even the snakes form an interesting study. If the child is carefully trained to recognize quickly the poisonous species, he will soon become interested in their habits and lose much of the snake-terror which is the bane of many a country child's existence. For the older children a camera with which to take snapshots is a help to nature study.

Another field of interest which widens the world of the country boy and girl is the radio. Indeed the radio receiving set has come to be almost a necessity in every American farm home. It is remarkable how quickly the country people have recognized the utility of this new invention. The farmers are finding the receiving set particularly valuable in getting market reports, and the

weather report for the next day, which is sent out from Washington, D. C., and relayed from other stations at 10 P. M. Sometimes this service is invaluable.

A good crystal set can be built by a bright boy or girl, after a little study, for less than ten dollars, and it becomes an important factor in the family life. A crystal set, however, is not designed to operate a loud speaker, nor will it bring in programs from great distances. The usual range is said to be about twenty-five miles, but frequently it reaches much farther than this, and whatever it receives is marked by a sweet, clear tone. The more expensive tube sets bring in the programs with less interference and from a wide range, and can be equipped with loud speaking devices. Of 1200 farm owners of radio receiving sets who recently reported to the Department of Agriculture, about half owned tube sets and half crystal sets, but undoubtedly the use of tube sets is growing. The average cost of home-made crystal sets was eleven dollars, of home-made tube sets eighty-three dollars. Complete sets bought from the factory ran considerably higher in price, but were often reported as more satisfactory. Any kind of radio set is far better than none, and it is coming to be one of the real necessities of the country home.

Not only does the family radio builder learn much about the science of electricity, but all the children hurry through their evening chores in order to have time to listen in to the evening program. And it is a great experience for the farm woman, particularly if she lives far from a city, to hurry in from washing of the

milk pails and find herself with the turn of a knob in the midst of a city symphony concert. It is a real concert, too, for she can hear the folks clapping their hands at the end of the number, and hear the rustle as they turn their programs. In the old days when a country woman wanted to hear some good music, she had to spend a half day of hard work dressing up in uncomfortable clothes and taking the train to the city, not to mention a considerable amount of money for concert tickets and train fare. And she would get home at one or two o'clock in the morning with a headache to hang over into the next day. But now she can listen to excellent symphony concerts, organ recitals, violin and vocal numbers without any trouble at all. Excellent talks on almost every subject are broadcast and the daily paper brings the program from the broadcasting stations, so that no one need miss anything that is good.

Major General Harbord of the Radio Corporation of America recently said: "The greatest accomplishment of the radio is its service in bringing knowledge and pleasure to remote and isolated communities. The great cities no longer have a monopoly of the finest fruits of our culture in such things as music, oratory and easy contact with our scientists and scholars. Through radio the greatest singers, the master musicians, the famous scientists, scholars and thinkers of the world can and do reach an audience which extends from the heart of New York or London to the loneliest farm on the western prairies or the most isolated mountain village. The far-reaching influence of radio in this respect cannot but have a pro-

found effect in raising the cultural level of our race."

In fact a good radio receiving set now brings much of the life of the cities to the country boy and girl. They delight in hearing the latest song hits and keeping up by word of mouth, as it were, with the gay life outside their own world, as well as listening in upon the good music and good talks which form the meat of the evening program. Their knowledge of geography is enlarged as they study the radio maps and keep up the daily "log" of stations received by the home set, and for the little children of the family the regular bedtime story is a real treat. So that altogether the radio accomplishes much in the development of the country child by furnishing him with a brand-new fad, intensely interesting in itself, and full of possibilities for his further progress.

A delightful fad for the farm girl is the study of the wild flowers and plants of the neighborhood. Her love for pretty things draws her to them instinctively and her interest can easily be developed until it is educational. Again guide-books with colored pictures are almost necessary. The old-time botanies with their intricate keys and microscopic work are practically useless for a child. A farm woman writes me: "I really think children enjoy farm life so much more if they can call the different plants, flowers, birds and butterflies by name. A child seeing these things every day and not knowing them is as bad off as the city child who doesn't know the name of his next-door neighbor." And this knowledge does bring a real intimacy with the woods and fields which no other knowledge gives. It is one

of the great opportunities of farm life everywhere. Other studies of stones, butterflies, beetles, worms, and trees can be developed until each child in the family has his own specialty in natural lore, about which he can talk with interest and appreciation.

If either the boy or girl shows an interest in carpentry, the farm carpenter shop will be a joy. I remember that some of the happiest days of my own childhood were spent at work with the plane and the saw and the drawing-knife and the chisel in the gray old carpenter shop, and I still keep in my room in the country pieces of furniture which I made with my own hands. Some of them I also carved or decorated in burnt work. Carpentry and cabinet work form a fascinating exercise and, if soft wood is used, not too exacting on a girl's strength. There is no reason why any farm girl who is handy with tools should not make most of the furniture for her own room. If the farmer himself is not a skilful carpenter, it may be possible to arrange for some one in the neighborhood to give her a little guidance in the use of the various tools. The farm blacksmith shop, too, is a place of recreation. With a little training and unlimited energy and patience the young worker can make quaint hinges, candlesticks, sconces for candles, and other useful articles, as well as gain a skill which will be useful later in repairing the farm tools.

One of the greatest needs of the country boy or girl with special interests is a personal room, sacred from the rest of the family, or, failing this, a roomy cupboard in which all the treasures can be locked up and

kept safe from the younger children. If the boy is handy with tools, he can make a neat cabinet for his collections, in which to arrange them and display them as he sees fit. Or if there is no available place in the house for such a bulky piece of furniture he should be allowed to build a shack somewhere about the place in which he can store his treasures, and work on his collections. It will do much to give him a self-reliant spirit if he realizes that one place on the farm is wholly his own.

The girl, too, should have her own room if possible, where she can keep her belongings and feel a responsibility for keeping it dainty and neat. Some of the farm girls' clubs have interested their members in contests in furnishing bedrooms. Each girl is expected to make her own room dainty and livable, with the least possible expense. And in the judging of results the character of the original furnishings and the amount of money spent is counted, as well as the appearance and convenience of the finished room. Many farm girls with a little light paint, pretty wall paper and dainty embroidered or figured hangings have furnished rooms of which they are very justly proud.

Religion

Religion for the country child is a natural expression of himself. Country people, if they are spiritually minded at all, live very close to God in their daily lives. They see Him in a thousand manifestations about them and feel Him aiding their merely human efforts to grow

and nurture the growing plants and animals upon the farm. And one seldom finds a little child who is not spiritually minded. All he needs is a gentle guidance from mother or father to see in all the miracles of nature around him the workings of a beautiful and beneficent power. Little talks on Sunday afternoon walks in the woods and fields, simple stories from the Bible of God's love for man, and a few simple prayers and hymns and psalms which can be memorized on rainy Sundays will give the necessary direction to the country child's adventures in religion. If the local Sunday School and church training is inefficient, it is also necessary to give him a knowledge of the Bible, which can best be done by good books of Bible stories and selected readings from the Bible itself. Those parts should be picked out which will link up with the child's experience on the farm. For instance, every country child who knows the farm flock of sheep will enjoy and appreciate, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want," and "I am the Shepherd, ye are the sheep." And thus with the proper guidance the farm will give to all the children an ever-widening vision of the meaning of life. Wherever they may go or whatever they may do in after years, they will need this vision—and they will need it most of all if they stay upon the farm. Dr. L. H. Bailey says: "A man cannot be a good farmer unless he is a religious man. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

And certainly the girl who is to be a farm woman will have much need for the fundamental appreciation of

religion. It will make even her hardest work and her heaviest cares seem a part of God's work. As a New York country woman writes me, after telling of being up almost all night to get her work done after a day at the fair: "I went out at almost three o'clock to hang up the milk-strainers. And out under the trees I looked up to see the great blue bowl overhead and the stars swinging on and on, and I just sat down on a bench underneath and listened to the silence. Sat there and saw the beauty of it all in just the light that comes before the dawn. It isn't dawn in September at three, but there is a stillness and a hush and I sat and watched the old earth draw her breath—and I drew mine. And as I sat I did n't care that in another hour the cows would be in the barn and the day would open up again. I forgot the milking and the noise and the bustle, for the night was so soft and sweet and I had a chance to look at it alone." The wise farm woman will build up in her little daughter a delight in nature so that she can turn to it for renewed strength and spiritual power in all the difficult and weary hours of her life.

Work

Country people usually believe in the necessity of work for children. To them growth is inconceivable without the aid of work, and work itself is self-expression through action which gives an opportunity for moral and spiritual growth. For this reason the farm children are taught to work, and the farm people

do not believe in arbitrary restrictions upon children's labor. But there is really a great difference between children's work as it is known upon the average farm and "child-labor." Children's work may be a happy exercise as well as a useful one. They learn best by doing things with their hands and thinking things out as they do them, and farm children have this training in self-help provided for them every day of their lives. All children love to do what older people do—at least to try to do it—and if they are praised whenever they make an effort, even if they are not very successful, they will try and try again until they can really accomplish something. But what is meant by child labor is the performance of tasks which, after the first few trials, have little educative value, which hold the child to a strict routine, leaving many of his muscles underdeveloped, and which by the long hours that are involved deprive him of his rights to play and education. As every farm person knows, very few of the tasks which the farm children are called upon to do have any of the characteristics of child labor. Except in a few sections of the country in which large groups of children are employed under a "boss" at weeding, transplanting, or berry-picking, the farm child's work is widely varied, nearly always has new elements in it for him to think about and leaves him much time for play between tasks.

Routine chores are least helpful to a child's development and if there are too many of them and they call for much the same play of muscles, there is some physical danger. Some country children, for instance, have

become stoop-shouldered because nearly all the daily tasks involved stooping, lifting or carrying—like carrying baskets of corn in feeding, buckets of milk, water, and swill, and baskets of vegetables from the garden, picking vegetables, washing dishes, etc. Thus the muscles of the chest become unduly developed in comparison with those of the back, and a stoop and general awkwardness is the result. A frequent change to work in other positions, ball games and general gymnastic work, and the lightening of loads by the use of a little wagon wherever possible, will help to prevent the faulty posture, which, persisted in, will compress the lungs and impair to some extent the general health of the child. Bernarr MacFadden, the physical culture expert, gives as a corrective exercise for stooped shoulders the following: "An ideal posture corrective is the simple exercise of clasping the hands back of the head, then pulling the head and elbows backward. This will straighten the spine, raise the chest and give good standing position. Repeat this movement several times whenever you think of it, if possible dozens of times a day." But a constant change of work to bring all the muscles into play is the best corrective.

Another danger is in the unprotected machinery generally used upon farms, though very often a protective device would add but little to the cost of the machine. This is one thing for which the farm women of the country should certainly stand together, to demand from the manufacturers of farm machinery machines as "fool-proof" as possible, if there is any likelihood that the farm children will be called upon to use them.

Proper safety devices would undoubtedly save many farm children from death or maiming. Still another danger to the child is that in the rush and excitement of harvesting and threshing, he may undertake too much or try to "show off" and do himself permanent physical injury. In fact children on the farm or anywhere else should always work under pretty close supervision by some one who is thinking more of their welfare than of making money or of merely getting the work done. Work can always be done to-morrow, but a crippled child is crippled a long, long time.

What the eager country child wants is life, and he wants it more abundantly. He wants to take his place among the doers of the world and to become a creator in carpentry, cooking, raising a garden, raising pigs or colts or calves, canning fruits, and all the other real tasks of the farm. Too many routine tasks, even if they are well within his powers, grow monotonous and he thinks of them as drudgery. But give him a real chance at a real job and he will respond with an interest, and think the farm is the greatest place in the world. Let the girl become the family cake-baker or maker of preserves, or make pretty underwear for herself and baby sister, or have a tomato or flower garden all her own to do with as she pleases. Let the boy grow his acre of corn, or raise his pig for the pig club, or take charge of the orchard, or any other part of the farm work which is within his strength and which will bring some money into his pocket, and he will be eager and enthusiastic. One woman, reared on a farm, told me of her childhood training: "I was n't taught to do

a thing. I could get out the bread-board and sift the flour and knead the dough and stoke the oven, but I could n't make a loaf of bread. I peeled hundreds of bushels of apples and other fruit and prepared berries for cooking and all kinds of vegetables, and washed up the heavy pots and kettles after the work was done, but if I had been expected to put up a single can, I wouldn't have known how to turn my hand over.'' The trouble was, of course, that her mother had kept all the interesting part of the work for herself, and had failed to give her daughter a real training in anything.

Along with a training in work, should come a careful training in business methods. While it is true that in the country money is not regarded as being able to do everything, as it too often is in town, and much of the country child's work should be done for the general good of the family without thought of payment, still every child should have some task for the accomplishment of which he is given money, even if it is only a little. And as soon as possible every child should have a little savings account or a bank account of his own, for training in the use and handling of money must be begun early if it is to be effective. And the figuring of little sums, deciding among many things he wants to buy, and the saving up of small amounts in order to buy something larger and more desirable, are all worth much more than the money it takes to give this training. The child will soon learn, too, how to invest his small savings in something on the farm which will bring in more money, and to place part of his money in a savings account so that it can draw interest. Some mothers

teach their children the value of interest by having the interest on the little deposit paid into the child's hand once every six months. Thus the child understands that his money has "worked for him" to that extent.

Many families so arrange it that the children in their work are looking forward to a high-school or college education, as this gives them a definite goal in which they will be interested. There is no reason why any bright and ambitious country boy should not put himself through college on the proceeds of his corn, pigs, calves, or other special activities, and yet have much time to help with the regular work of the farm. And the girl should be given an equally good chance to secure an education. She should be allowed to undertake canning, cake-baking, pickle-making, poultry raising, bee-keeping, or some other profitable side-line in which she can make her own money. Or if the home duties are so great that her time must be given to them she should be given a proper allowance for her help.

Many farm girls have added to their income by developing a small fruit garden, as there is nearly always a local market for berries in season. Strawberries, raspberries, dewberries, and blackberries give a succession of crops and bulletins from the Department of Agriculture furnish expert help on their planting and culture. Any berries which do not find an immediate market can be made into jams and jellies for family use or for sale later. Some girls grow tomatoes and can them and sell them locally. Others make a specialty of raising turkeys or ducks or geese. Others, who are near a city market, develop an old-fashioned flower garden

and sell flowers, bulbs and roots to the city people. Still other girls who enjoy sewing, work up a trade in making simple children's clothes in attractive styles for the busy mothers in the neighborhood. Live-stock raising is a favorite field for girls as well as boys, and many girls raise pigs, calves, or Shetland ponies and make a good income from them.

In fact, the farm girl should be given just as good a chance in everything as her brother has. She should work outdoors a good part of her time, take part in all the games and vigorous exercises, go on all the fishing and nutting expeditions, be allowed some free time from the care of the little children of the family, and learn to harness the horse or drive the automobile so that she can come and go with freedom. If she is given a square deal, including some chance for social development, she will realize that not all the opportunities of life are to be found in the cities. As the girl grows older she can take more of the home responsibility. Many farm girls, after working out their own budget of expenses for some time, prepare the budget for the family, reckoning amounts and kinds of supplies needed, clothes necessary, quality and quantities of materials and additions to the home equipment. This gives them a greater understanding of the home problems and a greater interest in them. The farm boy, also, may become the business man of the farm, keeping the accounts in order, making out the farm inventory each year, and figuring up the production costs. It is excellent training and not burdensome if the boy is quick at figures.

Social Training

The social training of country children is very often neglected. They are allowed to hang back when company comes, and then when they wish to be sociable they are awkward and self-conscious. One country mother writes me that she thinks careful social training a most important part of the country child's education. She says that she is always careful to treat her children like grown-ups, introducing them to callers just as if they were grown people, and having them sit down and join in the conversation for a little while with the visitors. If fruit or cider is to be served the children are expected to serve it, to bring napkins or plates and otherwise look after the comfort of the guests. And if a guest is to be shown about the farm, one of the children is chosen to be the guide, to lead the way and answer questions and do the honors of the occasion. Though the mother goes along, she does not interfere or make any additions to the information until the child has told all he knows. And occasionally she invites in another child or two for a meal or for the afternoon, and lets one of the children be host or hostess for the occasion. The child feels a great responsibility for making his guests comfortable, playing the games which they will enjoy most and making a happy party. Next time, when another child is the leader, he receives training in being a guest. "Please" and "thank you" are the rule of the house and as real a courtesy is extended to the baby as to the outside visitor. In this way she gives the children a simple social training which they enjoy

and which will save them from many an embarrassed moment in after life.

Another thing which the woman on the farm must teach her children in the home is the use of good English. Country living tends to carelessness of speech, and with the present low standard for teachers in the country schools the young girl who is employed often, by her own speech mistakes, teaches the children bad English instead of good. In many farm families the children are expected to talk at the table, each about whatever he is most interested in, for the pleasure of the rest of the family. It is really a simple matter to teach careful speech to children if one's efforts are persisted in from day to day, for the actual number of wrong forms they use is not likely to be numerous—usually there are three or four wrong forms of verbs, wrong case forms for pronouns, and a few careless pronunciations.

Every country boy and girl has a personality different from that of every other person in the world, and should be allowed to develop it to the greatest possible extent. But at the same time the country child, like the city child, must learn how to work with others, to give up personal preferences for the sake of the general good, to conform to all the laws and customs which are for the good of society, and in general, to learn how to lead other people as well as to do the right thing himself. In other words, he must know how to be his distinctive self on the one hand, and yet be merged with the crowd on the other. With such training the country-reared young person will be fit for any position

in life to which his talents or his industry may raise him, whether this be in the country or in the city.

It is an old, exploded notion that inevitably the brightest of the country boys and girls go to the city. Indeed, I have always had a suspicion that it never was anything but a bit of fiction, spread abroad by the city people to justify their self-conceit. The fact is that country life as a whole in America has moved ahead just about as fast as city life has, and there is no noticeable difference in intelligence between the people in the cities and the people on the farms. It is true there are many boys and girls born on the farm with native gifts for the development of which the city offers the only opportunity, and it is better for them to seek the larger centers. But all the average bright girl or boy needs for becoming intensely interested in the farm is a part of its interesting work to do and not too much of it; an opportunity to get ahead and a reasonable amount of time and opportunity for recreation.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SCHOOL

OF all the serious problems which confront the thinking farm woman, there is none more difficult than that of the rural school. She realizes only too clearly that as conditions now are in many communities her children are penalized for living in the country, because the opportunities for securing a good education are so insufficient. In the recent exodus from the rural districts by thousands of families many parents gave as their reason that they were going to town to secure better schooling for their children. This is indeed a laudable motive, but it is probable that in many cases better results would have been secured and greater happiness for the children by developing the rural school instead of moving within reach of the town school.

No other institution in country life is so backward as the average country school. Indeed it is actually true that in many good farming localities the children are being taught in schools almost as primitive as those their grandfathers attended when they were boys. The school building is very little more comfortable than the old log schoolhouse and the seats and desks almost as inadequate. There is little modern equipment of

any kind. The teacher, though probably better trained, is often so young in years and experience that she is, on the whole, inferior in her influence to the old-time schoolmaster. Young people not nearly old enough to vote are allowed to teach in most country schools without any question. As the rest of the world has moved on, the school has not moved with it. In grandfather's childhood the lack of educational facilities did not matter much, because other children had no better. Even the city schools were of the same type. But the boys and girls of to-day in the one-room country school must enter upon their life work in competition with men and women trained in the fine consolidated schools and in the well-equipped schools of the cities. If it were not for the additional training which they receive in the work and play on the farm, they would be hopelessly handicapped in the race. In any case, their chances for success in life are certainly less because of their lack of proper training.

The school equipment has not kept up with that of the homes of the community. The old log schoolhouse of grandfather's time was probably as comfortable as were most of the homes of the neighborhood. But in many country districts to-day the women of the farm are compelled to send their children to schools which are far below their home conditions. In the homes pretty rugs and fresh curtains and soft-tinted walls and comfortable chairs have taken the place of the discomforts and ugliness of the pioneer home, but in the schools the walls are still bare and ugly, the seats uncomfortable, there are no curtains or inside blinds at the windows, and the

whole place is sometimes so dirty that the family laundry work is greatly increased. However eager and willing the young teacher may be, she cannot teach well under such conditions. In fact, the mere housekeeping of country schools in most communities has been woefully neglected. One country woman remarked to me, as she pointed out the dirt on the schoolhouse floor, "Could n't you just tell by looking at it that the men were running it?" And surely no real housekeeper would ever have let a room get in such a condition.

So it seems to me that one of the first steps to improve the country school is for the women themselves to take a much larger part on the school boards and in everything which pertains to the country school. A schoolhouse is first of all a house—and women have certainly had training in housekeeping. And second, it is a place for training children—and that is also primarily the woman's field. Indeed, the schoolhouse is a home, to all the children of the neighborhood for several hours a day, and it should have all that loving care which a home demands. In many country communities great changes have been brought about in the schools with little increased cost to the taxpayers, because the women of the local Grange, or of the churches, or of a woman's club, have taken an active interest in the problem. Results have usually been better when one organization made the local school and its problems its especial task and asked for coöperation from the other local groups. For this plan insures continued effort by a part of the people, and an active interest. What is everybody's

business is usually nobody's business in country life affairs.

In some school districts it has seemed better to organize a Parent-Teacher Association for the definite purpose of improving the school. The parents, or at least the mothers, meet with the teacher at the schoolhouse once each month to talk over school problems and ways of solving them, and it is surprising what they have been able to accomplish in a short time. In a recent letter to *The Farmer's Wife,* an Iowa farm woman tells this inspiring story of the work of the local association:

We did three things to start the improvement—started *a parent-teacher* association, *elected a woman* on the board of directors, and *hired teachers who cared about the school.* Our building was a two-room school in a thickly populated rural district, with over sixty children crowded into the primary room.

The first thing was to get the parents to see the overcrowded, unhealthy conditions, and, if possible, to improve things. Once a month a mothers' meeting was held in the afternoon and monthly meetings in the evening gave father a chance to see things. The mothers began the good work by studying nutrition and as a result warm lunches were served. In the evening plans for better schools were discussed, besides having music and various interesting numbers on the program. The meetings served to get people acquainted besides helping the school.

These are some of the direct results of this campaign.

1. The schoolhouse was remodeled, two rooms being added, besides a large basement.

2. Indoor toilets were provided.

3. Heating plant was installed.

4. A room in the basement was planned for gymnasium work or play.

5. A place for domestic science was arranged. This has not been used this year but will be equipped as soon as can be managed.

6. Electric lights were put in.

7. The school was standardized.

8. Some playground equipment was purchased and more will be added when more money is raised.

9. The lighting of the rooms was made better by changing the windows.

10. Primary equipment, maps, sets of supplementary readers, globes and various other supplies were purchased.

11. A well was dug and running water is now available throughout the building.

12. One teacher was elected principal of the building.

13. A janitor was hired.

14. A bazaar was held this winter, netting over $400.

15. A fine piano was bought. The primary room has record music.

16. The school yard, once so muddy in wet weather as to make playing almost impossible, has been graded and improved. The directors are considering the problem of more playground.

Many socials, and various money-making events were held to raise the money for these improvements and I do not think the people will be satisfied to stop now. All this has happened in less than a year. Public sentiment seemed to be against building on account of the high tax and I am afraid the proposition would have been defeated at the voting if the interest of the people had not been aroused.

The Consolidated School

In some country communities the way out to better training for the children has been through the consolidated school. A large, well-equipped building is erected at some central point, the one-room schools closed, and the children carried back and forth in wagons or motor buses. The plan has its disadvantages, of course, but the country women whom I know report that after it has been tried for a time they would not go back to the inefficient one-room school for anything in the world. Even those who most opposed the change in the beginning are often the most enthusiastic.

Some of the advantages of the consolidated school, according to the reports I have had from the farm people, are that the attendance is greatly increased throughout the community. There is a joy in working in big classes and taking part in the varied activities of the larger school. And the older children especially, who used to become discontented and drop out of the one-room school, find their interest in school events increasing instead of growing less. The classes are better graded and the teacher can have longer lesson periods and give more thought and attention to the needs of each class. The children can have instruction in drawing, music, nature study, manual training, domestic science, and agriculture because the larger school can provide better trained teachers and the equipment necessary for these studies. And the larger

number of children permits the organization of group games on the playground, and of an orchestra, a band, a dramatic society, a literary society, and all the other activities which are so much enjoyed by the children in the city schools. In fact, the consolidated school comes nearest to providing for country children the kind and amount of training which city children receive—and that is what the thinking farm woman greatly desires. Yet according to the reports the consolidated school actually costs very little more than the one-room school. It is the combining of forces which renders the better training possible.

It is true that the children are farther away from home during school hours. But a child one mile from home, who has to walk, is really farther away than a child five miles off who has transportation. Even if the very youngest children should miss a year of school, the added length of the term and the better instruction would give an increase in their schooling. But the tiny children enjoy the ride in a comfortable bus, the good hot lunch at school, which is usually provided by the domestic science department, and the opportunity of associating with many little ones of their own age. The older people also take a greater interest in the consolidated school, for it gives them something to be proud of. After the first obstacles of the small neighborhood feeling are overcome they are glad to belong to the larger neighborhood as it gives them a larger acquaintance and a wider view of life. As with the country church, the reach of the one-room country

school is much too small since the expansion of country life brought about by better roads and automobiles. It must give way in the new and larger neighborhood to a more efficient institution if our country life is to prosper as it should. The school becomes a center of community life for recreation, entertainment and amusement, as well as for instruction. In fact, the advantages of the consolidated school so far outweigh the disadvantages that the country people with whom I have talked have been greatly in its favor.

It usually takes many months to develop the community sentiment in favor of consolidating the schools, but a determined body of men and women can bring it about. It is sometimes wise to show views of consolidated schools, with interesting motion pictures of the children on the playground, in the domestic science and manual training laboratories, and in the other school activities. If there is a consolidated school in a nearby county, enthusiastic parents from that place will probably be glad to tell about their own school. Groups of the children in a pageant or a simple dramatic entertainment will also prove a drawing card and show the parents what can be accomplished. Charts of costs of the different types of school, teachers' salaries, the tax rate, etc., help to give the people data from which to judge in considering the new plan. But the chief necessity is a constant insistence upon a better schooling for the children so that they will stand an even chance with the children trained in the fine schools of the cities.

Improvement of the One-Room School

Of course in many sections hills or mountains or streams or extremely bad roads render the consolidated school an impossibility because of transportation difficulties. But no situation is ever so bad that the women of the neighborhood, if they are really determined, cannot make great improvements in the housing of their children during school hours. A Pennsylvania farm woman tells of her experience with such a situation:

One afternoon, responding to a note from our teacher, some twenty other mothers and myself visited the school. It was a rainy day when every sound, every little irritation, was magnified to distracting proportions. We found our sixty-three children crowded into one muddy, gray, cheerless room—many single seats holding two of the tinier pupils. The stove smoked. The drab of the windows was accentuated by clear designs smeared on by fingers exploring for a view outside. One slip of a girl was pluckily holding all these little savages in good humor, even in average interest in their work. Usually, after the school day she did the janitor work, but to-day she took the time to talk very plainly to us. Rumors of impudence, bad language and a desultory attitude toward school work had reached us, but, like all mothers, we were slow to believe that it was our children and not the Browns' or the Smiths' who were at fault. We could not understand why our children did not like to go to school. What normal child would? There was nothing there to inspire any loyalty, interest or admiration.

Not a woman of us would have stood such conditions in our homes. Yet we were sending our children there seven hours daily for eight of the most impressionable years of

their lives, simply because we had never been interested enough to see for ourselves just what kind of a place our school was.

With our own hands and money we cleaned, painted and tinted the room, made bright cretonne curtains and hung some real pictures. The children voted to have nasturtiums for the decorative subject and cut them from brilliant paper for appliquéd borders. The scarred seats and wood work are painted nasturtium leaf green. The walls are soft yellow with brighter-hued appliquéd blooms. The proceeds of an oyster supper bought a music machine and records. Our husbands put up swings and teeter boards. The children, with real pride, keep the place clean and neat.

Sometimes the farm women arrange to give a play or some other entertainment from the proceeds of which they buy paint and varnish and blinds for the interior of the neglected school building and, with the help of the teacher and the older children, wield the brushes and put up the curtains themselves. Very frequently the school library is begun with funds raised by the women in the local neighborhood. In one community the Grange held a public auction for which everybody in the whole community contributed something, ranging from a horse to a pumpkin or a hand-made handkerchief. The local auctioneer gave his services for nothing and the women served a simple lunch. From the proceeds of the sale they realized about five hundred dollars which they spent for domestic science equipment for the school. Sometimes a pageant or operetta is given by the local people. And sometimes the boys in the manual training department and the girls in the sewing-classes use their

skill to make simple but useful articles for sale to increase the school equipment. They can also use their training to good advantage in putting up shelves, repairing the desks and sewing fresh curtains for the schoolroom.

It is true that all such improvements should be made by the legally authorized school authorities, with the money paid for school taxes, and wherever possible the better conditions should be brought about in this way. But if the district is so poor or the local political situation is such that this cannot be brought about, volunteer work is necessary. And the improvement of the schoolhouse by the women of the neighborhood often does much to waken the people to the needs of their children, and then public sentiment has its effect upon the school authorities. Many a country woman has made her first step into political life by leading the other women in a crusade for better schools. After which her ability is so well recognized that she is elected upon the local board and then to the county positions, and in time she can exert a large influence upon the improvement of the schools in other neighborhoods.

Probably the worst feature of the one-room school is its poor facilities for heating and ventilation. Those of us who attended a country school have many an unpleasant memory of the stuffy schoolroom smells. I remember well the red-hot stove in the middle of the room with sickening heat waves in the air about it, the stench of wet clothing steaming in the heat, the windows and doors shut tight against drafts,

and the attendant headaches and generally mean feelings which were the usual thing after a day at school. Yet this was in a neighborhood where no one used a stove for heating a room at home because of the belief that stove heat was not so healthful as the heat from an open fire. But the fathers and mothers had not apparently the slightest compunction about sentencing their children to six or seven hours a day in a stove-heated room, without the least attempt at ventilation. The condition was so bad that one of these country children, when a musty old closet was opened for cleaning, remarked, "That smells just like our school." Of course the parents had no intention of cruelty. They had merely grown used to conditions as they existed. They thought that the school was good enough and felt little responsibility for making it better.

It seems to me that the schoolhouse in any neighborhood should have the same standards of comfort and healthfulness as the better homes of that neighborhood. This does not mean that the furnishings should be rich or costly,—that is not necessary for either comfort or health,—but the seats should be as comfortable as those upon which the children sit at home. The walls should be tinted in a light color, that is pleasing to the eyes, with an occasional good picture for variety. The floor should have its cracks well filled and should be oiled or painted regularly. Fresh air and proper heat should be provided, individual drinking cups and individual hand towels and a supply of good water. There should be windows enough for plenty of light properly falling

on books and blackboards. And certainly it is not too much to ask that everything be kept reasonably clean! Brooms, mops, pails, cloths, soap should all be provided for cleaning just as in a home. Yet how many of the one-room country schools in America can measure up to this simple and reasonable standard? Wherever they do not, it seems to me it is primarily the task of the women of the neighborhood to see that they do. The teacher herself will probably have many suggestions for bettering the school, or if she is young and inexperienced, the local leaders can learn much from any good book on how to solve the practical problems of the rural school.

After these housekeeping methods have been applied to the one-room school, the next step should be the addition, if possible, of a second room. Even a small room will be a tremendous help in the work of the school day. It can serve as a cloakroom, as a workshop, as a storeroom for supplies of all kinds, as a place for small groups of children to study their lessons together, as a lunchroom, and as a general outlet for all the activities which are impossible in a one-room school. And if the schoolhouse is used also for community purposes the extra room will be most convenient for a cloakroom and committee room. If the new room is built upon the right-hand side of the building, the cutting off of light from the windows will do no harm as the light should always fall over the left shoulder of the pupil. When necessary, extra windows can be cut at the left side or rear of the seats so that sufficient light will be admitted even in gloomy weather.

The School-Yard

I used to wonder when I was a child why it was that our school-yard would never grow anything. The fields around it made excellent crops, and the corners of the worm fences along the roadsides put forth such a varied and luxurious growth that they were a constant joy to me on my way to and from school. But the school-yard was positively barren—nothing but the scraggliest weeds and the prickliest sand-briers ever grew there, and for the most part it was hard yellow clay with sharp cinders here and there, ready to give a vicious scrape to our knees and elbows whenever we fell down. It could not have been from the trampling of many little feet because in fact we played most of our recess games out on the softer dust of the road. There seemed a strange blight upon the school-yard, and I have often wondered since whether that is always the effect of rural education upon the soil! Even in communities where the cemetery is kept in good sod and green with vines and bushes I have noticed this same condition. Of course, it is right to show respect to the dead, but it seems to me that the children of a community are even more important than its graves.

It need not be a very difficult or expensive undertaking to beautify the school yard. In the spring the ground can be plowed and fertilized and put into condition for planting, then good grass seed sowed and vines and bushes planted. Native varieties are usually best because of their vigorous growth and because they will serve as a textbook for many a future lesson in

nature study. One school yard which I know has the tall fence at the rear covered with native bittersweet which forms a pleasant green background in the spring, and in the fall is a glowing mass of color, besides furnishing winter bouquets of the bright berries for the decoration of the schoolroom. Daffodils and peonies and a few other hardy old-fashioned flowers will add a note of color in the springtime. Several of the State colleges of agriculture have made a special study of school ground planting because they have noticed that the school-yard is usually one of the most neglected spots in the whole country-side. A letter to your own State college will bring you helpful suggestions about school-yard planting. This task, especially, is a good one for community effort. The teacher feels comparatively little interest in it since she seldom knows whether she will teach the same school the next year. And besides that, it is useless for her to do planting in the spring unless someone in the neighborhood will take enough interest to see that the grass is cut and the plantings cared for during the summer.

But once the school yard has been put in shape the teacher should be given to understand that she is expected to train the children to keep it so. However carefully a child is trained at home, he cannot grow up with a consideration for the rights of others if he is allowed to tear up and destroy at will in the school yard. This training in the rights of public property is as much a part of the teacher's task as training in reading or arithmetic. And most country teachers so dislike the barren environment in which they are earning

their daily bread that they are glad to coöperate in every way possible in the beautification of their surroundings. Once the neighborhood interest has been aroused in the project, it will not take long to provide good sanitary toilets, with a screen of evergreens around them, a sightly coal house, a good cement walk to the door—laid under the direction of some farmer who has had experience in mixing cement—a neat fence and a free-swinging gate. Even the children can take part in painting the fence, picking up stones and rubbish and putting the yard in order, but it will take continual training by both parents and teachers if they are to learn to keep it in order.

The School Training

Important as is the good housekeeping of the country schoolhouse and the improvement of the school grounds, even more important are the lessons which are taught the children from day to day. It is true that the general course is that prescribed by the State, but always the local people can have a considerable influence on the methods of teaching, if they work with the teacher of the school. This is one of the purposes for which the Parent-Teacher Associations are formed in many localities. The parents and teacher get together and talk over the needs of the children and between them work out the best ways of meeting them. But before improvement in the teaching can go very far, it is necessary for the parents to know something of what they want their children to be taught, and why.

First of all, it seems to me a country school should be a *country* school. Its teachings should begin always with the actual experiences of the children on the farm and in the home. All the things that they learn about animals, about plants, in their play, and in bringing up the cows and other daily tasks, should be made the basis of their work, and their knowledge of nature should be added to with every day in school. It is a shame to our system of education for a child to live in the country and yet know so little of the things about him. This would necessitate in the teacher some knowledge of botany and zoölogy and other natural sciences, and in the school library simple reference books with color plates on birds, trees, flowers, the smaller wild animals, butterflies, etc. With this equipment, even the young teacher can open the children's minds to many things, and teach them the valuable lesson that not only material wealth but also intellectual and spiritual wealth are to be found in the country.

I remember in my own childhood how much I wanted to know the names and the life-story of everything. But no one was able to tell me. No one seemed to know, the teacher least of all, the names of the tall mosses that grew along the fence rows, the hundreds of plants that grew and blossomed and faded along our way to school, or the names of the many birds that came to the big maple-tree near the schoolhouse door. Arithmetic was stupid stuff to me, but I would have worked eagerly from morning till night if I had had the chance, studying and classifying the natural life about me. In spite of this handicap, I learned to know the wild

flowers. Not a thing bloomed in all the woods that I did not learn a great deal about—but I had to name most of them for myself. Some of my names for them were fairly good and some of them amusing, but of course they were not the right ones and I found them a great handicap in all my later study of botany. In fact, so fixed did my childish names for them become in my mind that even yet I can seldom get the botanical name for one of the common wild-flowers without a mental struggle.

Nature study should not only be taught constantly, but the child's everyday experiences should be made the basis of much of the other work. Arithmetic becomes much more interesting if it is kept in terms of bushels of wheat, bales of hay, material for dresses, plans for carpentry, etc., instead of dealing with things the children have never heard of before. In some country schools the parents are asked to coöperate by suggesting problems which are really problems in the home. For problems in addition, for instance, the child can make an order for vegetable seed, writing the letter himself, finding the various kinds of vegetables in a seed catalogue and adding up the prices for the total. In subtraction, quantities of farm products sold and quantities remaining in the bin may serve as a basis. It is not difficult to teach in this way if the teacher herself has had farm experience and can devote sufficient time to her classes. Often she would be glad to do it if she felt that her efforts would be appreciated. Later in the course, the problems can deal with gardening, the buying and shipping of cattle, percentages of gain in cattle, the

draining of fields, and all the buying and selling of the farm, leading up to a thorough course in farm cost accounting and domestic budgeting—a course which should prepare the boy and girl to become the real bookkeepers of the farm and home.

A good course in English is particularly desirable for country children because an ineffective use of language is often their greatest handicap. They hear a careless speech at home, and they are often taught other bad language habits in the schoolroom. The result is that they have so narrow and limited a vocabulary that they are embarrassed in the presence of people who have had good speech training. They should have a thorough and continued drill in speaking clearly and with words properly pronounced, in spelling, in reading with ease and understanding, and in writing down their thoughts on paper. If this is accomplished, the usual lessons in formal English, diagramming, and the like may well be dispensed with. An ability to read quickly and easily is one of the greatest pleasures of the country person. Whatever he lacks in other ways, the world of books is always with him, if he is able to enter into it. In his hours of leisure he can, through reading, see the whole world and sit in the company of all the great people of the ages. He will never feel lonely even if he does not see other people for many days together, and he can constantly improve his farm practices by keeping up with the best which agricultural science has to offer. Indeed, it is the basis for all his later learning in every subject.

But though all the subjects should have a country

bearing this does not mean that the teaching of agriculture should be the chief end of the country school. Indeed I think it should not be. There has been much discussion for years about the matter of teaching agriculture in the public schools in order to "keep the boy on the farm." I think the most disastrous thing that could happen to country life would be to keep all the farm boys on the farm. There are too many people upon the farms now in the United States—that is the real reason for the present low prices of agricultural products. And I think it is no more desirable for all the sons of farmers to be farmers than for all the sons of ministers to be ministers or of lawyers to be lawyers. In every child that is born there is some particular gift or aptitude which should be developed as fully as possible for his own good and for the good of the nation. This means that on the farms will be born ministers and lawyers and architects and musicians and scientists and artists, and that each one should have his chance to develop that thing in himself which is most pleasing to him. The real grievance of the farm people has been that in our school system the science of agriculture has been given so little attention that the boy who was primarily fitted for agricultural pursuits did not stand an equal chance with his brothers who preferred the other professions.

In fact, what the country women want for their children is as nearly as possible an equal chance in education with the children of the cities. Their early training should be based upon different experiences, of course, but in the end they should study the same great liter-

ature and the same fine pictures and the same music, and have the same historical background and the same methods of speaking and reading and writing that are used in the city schools. They would not for anything have their children without those things, any more than they would wish their children to speak a different language from that of the city children. The best thing about our agricultural situation is that there is a continual flow from the farms to the cities and back again. Many thousands of the country children in the schools to-day will be the city dwellers of the future. And we wish to send them in without handicaps, with the same background of culture, so that they will have an even chance in the race of life.

But the country child should learn much about the place where he is, just as the city child learns about the city streets, the municipal government, fire protection, the police system, etc. Indeed the more he learns about the general country life the better he will be equipped for his future life wherever he may be. He should understand what is meant by coöperative selling and buying, he should know the duties of the sheriff and of other country and town officers, and how he can best perform the duties of citizenship so that he can benefit the whole community and further the common good. It is in such studies in early life that ambition is born in the child's mind.

And the country girl should certainly know something of all the many subjects discussed in this book, because these are the things which go to make up a country woman's living. For the child has always two

great needs. One is to develop the very best that is within himself, chiefly for his own sake. The other is to learn how to work with others and for others so that by corporate effort he can secure things which he could never be able to secure for himself. These are the two things which go to make an intelligent, patriotic and high-thinking citizen. And it is the second of these which has been most neglected in the country schools of the past and should be emphasized in the schools of the future.

Health Work

Another subject that has been greatly neglected in the country schools is that of health. Although some physiology has been studied, it has seldom had much bearing on everyday matters such as cleaning the teeth, sleeping with the windows open, and eating good healthful food. What is needed is a simple course in hygiene and sanitation, with all the everyday problems included, rather than a study of the various organs of the body or the articulation of the bones. Even if one's own child is carefully brought up on health principles in the home, this does not protect him from infection by the carelessness of those who have no such training. So every mother must see to it that all the children are given adequate instruction if her child is to keep well. The equipment for health teaching includes good scales for weighing and charts for posture and weights and heights for boys and girls. The study soon becomes like a real game to the children and they watch their in-

dividual health charts with much interest, coöperate with the teacher in doing the "health chores" and trying to build up strong and healthy bodies. And the children from the lower-class homes of the neighborhood often influence their families to better sanitary and hygienic practices so that the health level of the whole community is raised somewhat.

As a part of the health work in the school in many country places, the farm women's clubs have introduced the hot noon lunch. Mothers have long realized that the cold lunch at school, gulped down in a few bites as the child rushed out to the playground, was a menace to the health of the country school child. Now, by joining together and gathering a few dollars for equipment, they place a small oil-stove and a few utensils and staple supplies at hand for the teacher to use. Each day the teacher or an older pupil prepares one hot nourishing dish, for which supplies are brought from the homes of the children, and each child is served with a helping of this in addition to the usual sandwiches brought from home. Cocoa, cream of corn soup, cream pea or bean soup, potato soup, tomato soup, corn and potato chowder, and scalloped potatoes, are some of the dishes recommended as nourishing and easy to prepare under school conditions.

The following "Rules of Etiquette for the Hot Lunch" are given in the West Virginia extension bulletin on the hot lunch:

1. Air the room before meals are served. 2. Children should wash the hands before eating. 3. Place paper nap-

kin or clean square of cloth on desk for a tablecloth and arrange lunch on this. 4. Eat lunch in right order, with sweets last. 5. A fork or a spoon should be used to carry food to the mouth. 6. The children should be taught to eat slowly and quietly. Having the children remain in their seats will prevent hasty eating which may cause indigestion. 7. Children should be permitted to drink water with their lunch, but should not be allowed to swallow their food hurriedly by washing it down with water.

When these rules are well observed the children learn to follow the example set by their teacher and eat quietly and neatly. Children who are inclined to be finicky about their eating often overcome bad food habits because of their desire to eat what all the other children are eating. Thus they learn to like nutritious foods which their mothers could never get them to touch at home. The noon lunch is a real health service. It has been shown in many rural schools that the weight of the children increased somewhat and the days absent on account of sickness decreased considerably, after the introduction of the hot noon lunch. The work is linked with the other school subjects by a study of the nutrition of the foods served, how they were produced, and transported; and by figuring the cost of the food, and the amounts of supplies needed.

Wider Activities

Another important study for the country child is that of relating his own little world to the world at large. He should learn the story of how all the agricultural

products, as they leave the farm, are transported long distances, changed in the factories and finally serve the needs of the world. Thus he sees in prospect all the people for whom the farmer works. Then he should learn of all the people who, under our modern conditions, work for the farmer; the factories which spin and weave and fashion his clothes, the miners who dig the iron and coal, and the factories which shape the farm implements and all the furnishings for the country home. And he should understand something of the problems of labor and transportation and handling and marketing all these products. In this way the country child will learn of his dependence upon the rest of the world, as well as of the great value of the service which the farmer renders to mankind.

In many small communities the schoolhouse is almost the only social center and it is always the principal social center for the children, so that any group meetings which the school can foster are of great worth to the community. Often the Boys' Pig and Corn Clubs and the Girls' Canning or Tomato Clubs are formed in the school. The playground activities are frequently worked up into an annual Play Festival which is held in the spring. Such a festival makes an interesting community event and closes the school year with enthusiasm. The events may include all the various playground games, contests of many different kinds, rope skipping, folk dancing, and some simple masques or pageantry in costume. In fact, anything which the children can do and enjoy doing can be included in the program, which

can be given either at an afternoon celebration or as the chief attraction of a basket-dinner meeting or field day. Dramatic work is also possible even in the one-room school if the teacher is interested in it.

One of the greatest needs of the country community is usually a local high school, because the parents cannot bring themselves to send their children away from home at such a tender age. Unless there are relatives living in town to whom the child can be sent, his further education is apt to be delayed, at least, when he would have attended a nearer high school had there been one. Besides that, the parents often feel that this exposure of the young child to the "town idea" before he is able to think for himself, almost inevitably means that he will go to the city to live in after life. And while they wish him to be trained as the city children are trained, they regret having to send him to an environment in which the occupation of his father does not have an equally good show with other occupations in his training.

One of the best things about the consolidated school is that with the better equipment and the more efficient teaching it is a simple matter to add at least a year or two of high school work to the school course. And the interest of the work in the larger school holds the pupils' interest so that nearly all the children in the neighborhood finish the course. In the high school the curriculum may be exactly like that of the city high schools, with a good course in agriculture as one of the vocational studies, so that the boy who expects to stay

upon the farm will have the training which he will most need. Yet at the same time he should learn the cultural background of the race which will fit him for a more complete and understanding experience wherever he may be or whatever he may do in life.

In fact, I think that, after a thorough fundamental schooling, it is just as well if the boy and girl go to the city to finish their education. Even under the best conditions in the country the city will have much to offer in further training. Its rushing life gives a stimulation to the brain which has been trained in childhood among quieter surroundings, leading it to develop with great rapidity. For this reason it seems to me that perhaps an ideal education is that which keeps the boy and girl in the country in early life and sends them to the city for their later studies. In childhood they have time to dream and to think the long, long thoughts of youth and then they see in the city the great opportunities which are waiting for the able and eager worker. And the city which often stuns the mind of childhood will in later years merely stimulate it. The boy who sees a street-car every day, for instance, takes it for granted and scarcely notices it at all. But to the boy from the country it is a miracle and he is not content until he has thought out for himself all the problems it suggests.

With such a complete training for our country boys and girls, they will undoubtedly hold in the future the great place in the world's affairs which their forbears have held in the past. In the city pulpits, and on the judge's bench, in the sculptor's studio and the archi-

tect's office and in the great business positions of the world they will bring to their tasks the clean high-spirited dreams of the country-bred child, with a strength of mind and body great enough to make many of them come true for the advancement of humanity.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH

IT is evident to any one who travels the country roads in America in these days that the country church, as we have known it in the past, is falling into decay. And it does not take the reports of extensive religious surveys to convince one that perhaps two thirds of the country and village churches in the United States are either losing ground or are standing still in membership and in influence in their communities. Every country woman has felt the effects of it in her own church home, like all the others striving to hold out against the forces of disintegration of the present day. Or perhaps she sees the church of her forbears standing deserted and bat-haunted at the country cross-roads—one of the saddest sights of the long highway.

We cannot help but grieve over this apparent weakness of an institution which we have loved, and which has had so great an influence for good as has the old-time country church. We remember how it furnished an inspiration to many a man and many a woman who would otherwise have grown weary and despondent in the long, hard journey. And how the simple sermon which they heard on Sunday, linking up the humble daily duties of the farm with the plan of the Infinite

and the Eternal, gave their lives added dignity and meaning. How the good old hymns, the spirit of devotion and reverence, and the whole atmosphere of the group of earnest people gathered to worship in the little country church, were great forces for good in their lives. The members were few in number and lived very near together. Theirs was the intimate religion of an intimate little group not many times larger than the family itself, and it made a close bond of love and affection which put real meaning into the old hymn they loved, "Blest be the Tie that Binds."

Yet we may remember also that there were times when the old-fashioned church seemed too small for its own best good. It was built upon the cross-roads or other convenient spot, to serve those who were within walking or driving distance. Frequently the church was dominated, and not always for its good, by one family, including the married sons and daughters. Indeed it was frequently dominated by one individual. I have known country churches which were always spoken of locally as "Old Man Brown's church" or "Mrs. Green's meeting-house." Its religion became a sort of clan religion in which family prejudices played a large part. Even a slight difference in views was not tolerated, particularly as to the form of the service. And the only alternative for those who desired something different in their religion was to build another church at the same cross-roads and hold their own services. But in this, too, the religion took on a personal tone, and sometimes the community almost entirely lost sight of the teachings of the neighborly and kindly

Nazarene in the strife of their personal animosities. And that He once said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples if ye love one another."

And the denominations were eternally at war. It often seemed that every brand of faith was trying frantically to establish a church on the same cross-roads. As many as five churches have actually been built in such a situation, with scarcely enough people to form the congregation of one, and a tiny country village sometimes has as many as seven. They could be maintained at all only by the most energetic efforts, and the gaining of a new member by one of them was the cause of as much bitterness as if the saving of a sinner were not always to the glory of God. If some young boy of a family joined a different church, to which he was by temperament more inclined, he was fairly thrown into outer darkness by his relatives. And the saddest part of it was that often in the same county there were communities which had no church at all. Indeed there is no doubt that an over-churched condition has greatly damaged the cause of Christ in many neighborhoods. When the surrounding population has been falling off rapidly as it has been in most country districts, it is inevitable that many of the existing churches should be given up. They merely go the way of all things which are built upon an insufficient foundation. They fail because they are not big enough to live.

For the present era is one of big things and it is not surprising that the country church has responded to the challenge. Changes in transportation since the

days of the mud road and the ox-cart have made it possible for a vigorous church to serve many times as many people as did the meeting-house of the old days. Surely there is no reason why a church should not reach as far with its influence as does a good store, or a creamery, or a motion-picture house. With a larger membership it can undertake a broader program, with a full-time preacher in charge, and accomplish things which were quite impossible to the little old-time church. If, as the change is made, many of the old one-roomed churches stand silent and deserted it does not necessarily mean that the country people are becoming less religious, but rather that they are turning away from some of the faults of the churches of the past and trying to build a better church for the future. They are looking forward instead of back. The question which most interests the average farm woman is, "How can I secure good religious influences for my children in this neighborhood?" And she is doing everything in her power to provide for them a vital religious training.

Of the state of the country church to-day one can learn a great deal from the results of a recent survey. At the beginning of the Interchurch World Movement a Town and Country Survey was begun, and before the work was discontinued survey groups had been organized in 2,400 of the 3,000 counties in the United States, and more or less complete reports were forwarded to headquarters. After the work was given up for lack of funds the Committee on Social and Religious Surveys took over these reports and tabulated them and is now giving some of the results to the public. These reports

show that in many cases, while several churches are gradually losing ground from year to year, another church of the same denomination in a similar location is growing rapidly and the country people are flocking to it for spiritual help. What makes the difference? No one can say in any particular instance. And yet when thousands of churches are ranked according to their gains in membership and power in the community, one can discover some of the elements that seem to be making the difference in results. And from them we can learn not only the kinds of churches which are making the most progress to-day, but also what will probably be the country church of to-morrow. Let us notice some of the characteristics of the churches which are growing to-day.

The growing church is usually the larger church—serving a membership perhaps ten times larger than that of the old-time church. This enlarging of the field in the prosperous churches has been brought about in many different ways. Sometimes the governing boards of denominations, realizing that the community was over-churched, have agreed to close up the dying churches and leave the field to one. The gains of that denomination are then offset by a corresponding loss in other over-churched communities. Sometimes, with the development of good roads and the general use of automobiles, it has been possible to combine two or more small churches of the same faith. When the churches are frame buildings they have even been carried on rollers to some point between the two communities, and one used for church services, the other for Sunday

School and community meetings. Thus both congregations make a contribution to the development of a larger church which can have a larger influence.

In still other communities the country churches have all been given up and their membership has joined forces with the larger churches of the nearest town. There seems to be a growing tendency toward this in some of the States, and it has its advantages if the town and country people can put aside their differences in point of view and really unite in their religion. Perhaps one reason for this tendency is that the country people are going to town more and more for their entertainment and instruction. And once the go-to-town habit has been formed, the real country church has little chance to survive. Many country women write me that they are losing their churches very rapidly because the people are near enough to attend services in the city. The consolidated school, too, is teaching the country people the benefits of larger units for instruction. So the idea of a consolidated church tends to grow in their minds. For transportation of members who have no conveyance of their own, the school busses are used in some localities. Thus no one is deprived of the service because of lack of transportation.

In other communities the rural churches of all denominations have combined to form a community church of no denomination. The preacher is chosen for his service to the community rather than because he repsents an organized religion. This type of church has been very successful in some neighborhoods, making for a much greater friendliness among the people, and sav-

ing much lost motion in carrying out various projects for the good of the community. But so many difficulties are in its way that this plan has not been as generally successful as at first seemed probable.

A more successful form of coöperation has been the federation of the churches. From three to five churches of the community decide to join forces for the sake of better equipment, without giving up their denominational connection. By combining they can erect a larger building, or divide the use of buildings already available. The whole community comes together for general services—a thing that seldom occurred before in those communities except for a funeral or a wedding. And yet each denomination is free to hold its own services in the church as often as it pleases. The affairs of the federated churches are managed by a governing board, made up of an equal number of members from each denomination.

These are some of the plans used to give the church a wider reach in country communities. Other plans can be worked out in practice, but whatever the plan, if the country church is to survive it must find some way to serve more people. It can do more and live or do less and perish, for there is no such thing as standing still in life. Any institution which does not make progress is going backward. And it would be a foolish person, indeed, who would think that the services in the little country church to-day have the same power as those of fifty years ago. Times have changed greatly, and the call to a wider field has been felt by the earnest young man who, fifty years ago, would have been a

country preacher—just as it has been felt by others in every walk of life. And the only hope for the country church of to-day to get a man of the same earnestness and training, is to provide him that wider field within the country community.

The country church which is growing is not so strongly denominational as were most of the churches of the past. The successful church may be of one denomination—indeed it usually is—but its chief end is always service to the community rather than service to the denomination. The churches are finding that a spirit of tolerance toward other faiths is necessary if the young people are to be appealed to. For the young folks of to-day reserve the right to make up their minds for themselves in religious matters as in other things, and few of them will endure a religion which divides, instead of unifies, God's people in His service. And they are seldom inclined to take notice of fine denominational distinctions. Even the older people are coming to see that the church is no longer a battle ground against all the other creeds and most of their neighbors. They do not approve of sermons which would offend visitors not of their own faith. Arguments over religious matters are much less common. A contentious old man said recently that he felt sure his neighbors were all doomed to damnation, because in the whole community he could not stir up a real old-fashioned hammer-and-tongs fight about baptism and foreordination! Whether this is a change for the worse or the better, it is true that the change has come in very many communities. The emphasis of the age is upon action—

not upon creed. The country people are feeling the need of many things which the church could supply if it would. They feel that, as Roosevelt is reported to have said, "There are targets a-plenty for us all to shoot at, without shooting at each other!" And the parents of growing families realize that their children must have an active religious belief if they are to hold out against the multiplying demoralizing influences of the present day. They want their young people to be kept so busy in their leisure hours with those things which are good, that they will not feel the urge toward the many things which are bad for their development.

It is this religious action, as well as religious worship, which the growing church undertakes to furnish. For the church of to-day believes that the Kingdom of Heaven is to come upon earth, and that we are working toward it here and now. And that the best way for a soul to grow in grace is by acts of brotherly love and coöperation with those about him. It gives up nothing of the good in the past, but it adds to that many a new opportunity for spiritual growth and for Christian fellowship. And its larger program so increases its resources that it can give its members the religious life and give it more abundantly.

It finds a place for all the newcomers in the community; even the immigrant peasants find that the church has adapted itself to their needs and made a place for them. The young people are a growing part of the church because it recognizes all their yearnings for activity. It does not force them to take an adult point of

view—that false system which in the old days rendered it almost as impossible for a vigorous youth to enter the church work as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. For the doctrine of the growing church is always "Do" instead of "Don't." With so much that ought to be done and so many innocent ways that country children can amuse themselves, certainly the church can keep them so busy it will need to waste little breath warning them about the things which are bad. Indeed the young people are not much inclined toward naughtiness in any country community—it is said that very few of the children in the reform schools come from the country districts, perhaps because their outdoor life gives them freedom of activity without committing crimes against their neighbors. But that is no reason why the social needs of the country young people should be so much neglected. And the growing country church now gives its influence for a healthy activity—physical, mental, and spiritual—to keep all its young people in the way which leads to the Kingdom of God.

The men of the growing church are kept busy, too, at tasks big enough to be worthy of them. They manage the finances of the organization, perhaps by a budget system or an every-member assessment, so that the regular expenses are met without strain. They act as big brothers to the boys of the community, overseeing all their activities, and with the assistance of the pastor, conduct a regular open forum for the discussion of religious questions as related to life in that neighborhood.

The women are just as busy as in the old days, but they are relieved from some of their financial worries. They give up the rôle of Martha for the rôle of Mary —that "better part" of which the Saviour speaks—and turn from money-making to more spiritual endeavors. They have time to lead the young people in their religious work, to study child-training, and the best methods of teaching religion in the home. They see that a rest room and nursery are provided, where the mothers of little children can be comfortable if they must retire during the service. They sometimes undertake special studies of the art of home-making or, if their economic needs are great, coöperation in selling the products of their farms and gardens.

For instance, the women of the aid society of a little Western country church have formed an alliance with the aid society of a church of the same denomination in the nearest city for marketing coöperatively. Each week they make up a list of products with their prices, which is passed around at the city women's meeting and an order written out. This is filled by the country women and delivered at the city church just in time for the next meeting. Baskets and other containers are returned the next week. In this way, the country women find a market for baskets of mixed vegetables, eggs, butter, cottage cheese, old-fashioned flowers, walnuts and hickory nuts, wild berries, pawpaws, strained honey, jellies, pickles and canned goods, many of which could not be marketed in any other way. And the city women pay less than the prices at the city stores and get everything fresh from the farm. Each article

is marked with the name of the woman who sells it, so that, if it pleases, new orders can be easily made. Many of the women have worked up a good trade in special articles in this way. The two groups of women pass suggestions back and forth continually, and thus come to know each other's problems and each other's needs very well. Their motto is the Golden Rule and they strive to live up to it in all their dealings with each other. "And that," as one of the country women says, "is what I call being a real Christian!"

In fact, the church people of the growing church are expected to lead in every task for the betterment of the community, which is not taken over by some other agency. For they realize that in building up the Kingdom of God upon earth, the highest good of spiritual life is often reached through mental and physical development and better economic conditions. Yet they are not satisfied with these second-best things, but persevere until the young people under their charge are joining with them in bringing in the Kingdom of God on earth and developing into fit members of the Kingdom of God in Heaven.

The Sunday School of this larger church is a real school, with trained teachers, and the children in graded classes. It is to be hoped that in the future their Bible study classes will meet not only on Sundays but several times a week—perhaps with their work recognized as an important part of the children's schooling. Graded mission study classes give the members a knowledge of the expansion of the Kingdom in other lands. And the minister, as teacher, in special classes,

undertakes to make plain to the young people the need of a strong personal religion in their lives.

Needless to say, the minister of the growing church gives all his time to the one congregation. At least, the Survey shows that a church with a full-time minister has a fifty per cent. better chance for growth than the church with a part-time minister. And no church can be very successful which has only part of a man to do a whole man's work. He knows something of rural social service work as well as of theology, so that he can lead the people in the application of Christianity to the affairs of the community. He need not be trained in agriculture, his members can secure that training for themselves, but he is at least country-minded so that he loves the things of the country as the country-dweller loves them. He makes the most of all the references in the Bible to the life of the farmer—much of Christ's teaching was to the farmers of His day—and from them brings his hearers to a sympathetic understanding of His spiritual teaching. For he realizes that the country people who go to church on Sunday are there for spiritual help, for something to turn their thoughts away from their everyday tasks to the Infinite and the Eternal.

He finds time, too, for much pastoral work, so that he knows his people's problems at first hand. He not only sows the seed of the Gospel in evangelical services or in private talks, but he takes time to tend it—as the good farmer tends his growing corn—so that it will bring forth a bountiful harvest. And even the poorer soil of the indifferent members of the community he

strives to improve by the proper kind of tillage. For the failures of the country minister in the past have been chiefly due to the fact that he was away from his work most of the time, and the absent preacher, like the absentee landlord, can have no right understanding of the local problems.

The church building of the growing church is much larger than the country church of the past—to house the greater congregation—though its tall spire still points heavenward in quite the old-fashioned way. But in a newer fashion it adds comfortable rooms for the pastor and the choir and separate Sunday School rooms. It is furnished with comfortable pews and a good organ, and the interior is so decorated that it makes an impression of beauty upon young minds instead of an impression of ugliness. For the church realizes that a child is much more impressed by the testimony of its senses than by intellectual appeals. And though beauty is neither righteousness nor religion, it lies so near to them in the feelings of the human heart that it should add its influence to all teachings of God and immortality. And perhaps in the country church of the future the altar will glimmer with brasses and be fragrant with flowers and the light will fall softly through stained windows, bringing into the church something of the beauty of the world of nature which every country person loves—the holy depths of the woods and the joyous inspiration of the spring.

And near the church, if not a part of it, is the community gathering-place, equipped for plays and moving-pictures and other entertainments, for the serv-

ing of dinners, and for the physical training of the young people of the neighborhood. This building may not be the property of the church alone. It is often a joint enterprise between two or more churches, or the church and the local Grange, the Boy Scouts and other rural social organizations. But the church has a large and important share in it and is the leader among the other organizations in bettering the social life of the whole community. Near it are outdoor playgrounds for the children and grounds for athletic games.

It is true, of course, that not all the growing country churches of to-day have all these things. Perhaps no one of them has reached the ideal state. Yet most of the churches which are making real progress are working toward these things, and through them are developing a larger service to the country community. And theirs will be the leadership in the religious life of the country people of to-morrow. It is to be hoped, indeed, that in them the earnest country boy, who longs to devote his life to the service of God, will find an open door to opportunity that will be a challenge to his spirit and his courage.

So we see very clearly that, although many of the little country churches are falling into ruin at the cross-roads, at the same time there is growing vigorously a somewhat different type of country church. Country people are exactly like city people in that they like modern, up-to-date institutions. They have a reverence for the old, but they realize that since our grandfather's day, country life has moved on, just as surely as has city life. Whatever is left unchanged from the last fifty

years is behind the times; it is a misfit in modern country life, just as much as horse-cars would be on modern city streets. In fact, the most discouraging aspect of the country church problem of to-day is that there are still so many of the meeting-houses of grandfather's time, quite untouched by the modern spirit. It is certainly not to the credit of a community where the farming is done with tractors and binders and other improved machinery to worship God in a building that belongs to the period of the sickle and the flail. It indicates that their religion is somehow not keeping pace with their agriculture. For the people much prefer to worship God in pleasant rather than unpleasant places. They feel no especial Christianity in the sharp edge of a pew, even though it has done equal damage to the legs of some of the saints of the past. They enjoy pictured windows and good music and good sermons, and gladly assemble with the many rather than with the few. The only reason that they do not is that they are in the grip of poverty, or that they are prevented by forces which they are unable to control.

That the country folks love a good service has been demonstrated by their interest in the city church services now being broadcast by radio. Services are broadcast regularly from many city churches and thousands of country people are listening-in. It is true that the result is sometimes that the listener feels a profound dissatisfaction with conditions in the local places of worship. As a farm woman said pointedly, "Why should I go to church to hear a poor sermon when I can stay at home and hear a good one?" But in the end,

I think, the local church, with its Christian fellowship, will win if only the church leaders will hear the challenge to a broader human service. And since the denomination of the church broadcasting is often unknown to the listener, the radio may be a great power in breaking down the barriers of a too-narrow denominationalism, and thus help to develop the broader view of the country church of to-morrow. The danger is that in the shift from the old to the new in the country church, some communities may have no religious service at all for a considerable period, with all the attendant evils of a lowered morality. For this reason it is important that we hold fast to that which is good in the old, while bringing about the new.

For the country church must be kept up as a living force if the nation is to prosper. Its spire must continue to point upward to remind men that life has height as well as breadth, and that they must take the upward climb. The country church of the past has performed a great service in sending forth boys and girls who, in the midst of great responsibilities, stood for the rugged virtues which were taught in the old meeting-house at home. Great numbers of successful business and professional men of the cities have had their religious training in the country church, and a majority of the ministers, bishops, and missionaries have been country born and reared. The present day church will affect the future just as greatly. Though the rural districts have now less than half the population of the nation, the last census shows that there are two and a half million more children in the country and the

villages than in the cities. These children are the leaders of the future and on their integrity of character, or lack of it, will undoubtedly rest many of the great concerns of the nation. So it is imperative that the rural church remain a vital force in training the young of America. The country church of the future may not be exactly like the church of the past. But it will stand triumphant for the simple faith of "Love God and your fellow man," which, Lincoln once said, is almost the whole of religion.

CHAPTER X

BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

THE average woman on the farm probably does more reading in the course of the year than does the average city woman. Even when her work is heaviest she can take a bit of time now and then to read as she rests, or as she does the churning, or waits for something to finish cooking, or for the men to come in from the fields. And I have known country women who after a hard day's work in the house and garden would sit up most of the night to finish an interesting book. Reading is one pleasure which is always at hand and of which she never tires. She keeps up with the farm papers even better than her husband does, looks over the new bulletins, reads the daily paper, and her woman's magazine, besides reading a few books in the course of the year.

She turns to a book particularly for a new point of view on life, to see life as someone else sees it, and to restore her sense of proportion. The farm women who write to me all agree that they sometimes think too much about the things immediately under their eyes. They stay at home so much, and talk with other people so little, that they are in danger of brooding over things which under other circumstances would not seem half

so important. One of them admits frankly that she likes tragic stories best. "I know it seems mean in me," she says, "but I do like to know that other folks are having their troubles, too. And these stories are so bad—by the time I have finished, my troubles don't look like anything at all." But most of them seek chiefly for courage and inspiration for their daily work. A New York farm woman writes: "The greatest thing one gets from reading is the courage to help one hold on to the task in hand. Farm life takes so much courage—it depends on such a variety of unstable things—that courage is the biggest asset the farmer's wife can have. The kind of courage to keep sweet when one must use green elm-wood for the kitchen range instead of coal. If we can get a vision of something beyond the faded paper on the kitchen walls and the spot on the barn roof where the shingles are off, then we can draw breath and take hold of things anew." For this reason they particularly enjoy good biographies of women, and stories that tell of people who have struggled against many things and yet kept their hearts in the midst of all their difficulties. If only such books were more numerous and could be placed in every farm home!

Poetry they find inspiring, also. And many a farm woman props up a book of verse on the back of the kitchen table, where she can memorize a line or two as she works. I have known women who could recite from memory half the poems in Palgrave's Golden Treasury or other similar collections and thought it nothing remarkable at all. They said that the verses were easily held in the memory and gave them some-

thing pleasant to think about when they were at their work. And the memorizing had been done a line or two at a time in the midst of their daily tasks. So much of the very best in English and American poetry deals with country scenes that it often seems written for the farm people alone. It speaks in terms of the things which they know—the beauties of nature around them.

In fiction they like two types of stories, the country story which opens their eyes to things in their own surroundings, and the story of other times and places which carries them quite away from home. Yet they find fault with most of the stories of country life because they do not consider them true to American conditions. In stories of the other kind they dislike any suggestion of immorality, but they do enjoy very intimate pictures of social life in the cities or at court, of quaint customs in other lands or in other localities in America, for in these they feel that they are themselves visiting the places described and taking part in the activities. One farm woman surprised me by knowing exactly the requirements in dress for a woman to be presented at the Court of St. James, though she had scarcely been off the home farm for years and had no thought of going to England. But the information appealed to her as an interesting human bit, quite outside her own circle of activity. Another woman said, in discussing a book which had broadened her view of human life: "I 'd like to read a book like that about every single locality in the whole world! I want to know how everybody else lives." Fantastic tales like

those by Jules Verne, tales of adventure, and rather sentimental love stories are popular, as well as many of the older English novels. Detective stories were mentioned only occasionally in the lists of favorites. But the books which seem to them to deal honestly with some phase of nature or country life hold an enduring place in their hearts. They speak of them again and again and recommend them for children's reading. John Burroughs, David Grayson, Gene Stratton Porter, Ernest Thompson-Seton, Emma Lindsay Squier, and recently Edna Ferber in "So-Big," are mentioned as favorite writers.

Travel stories are also most popular. The farm women feel with Ina Brevoort Roberts:

I cannot go
To other lands
Where I would know
What change is like;
I cannot be
In places new
Where I would see
The world so wide;
But one may grow
By books and so
I do not ever envy feel
For those who come and go.
The world is wide
But books are like the famous boots;
With seeing eyes and lengthy stride
I view the earth with love and pride
While sitting by my own fireside.

One farm woman tells of how she escaped a serious illness: "The doctor said I was on the edge of a breakdown if I did n't get a vacation, and I took up the reading habit for a vacation for my mind. I decided that worrying over bank-notes and weather is a non-profitable occupation. So I decided to travel—and think about something else besides our petty neighborhood differences and our next farmer who would n't fix his fences. I read a dozen books that took me all around the world. By the time I had read all these, the work was trotting right along and I was mistress of the job." One farm woman has been very much interested in books about Egypt since the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamen. She has read so much about it that she is familiar with every part of it. "In fact," she says, "I think if I should ever have a chance to go to Egypt, I 'd feel right at home!"

The farm woman also reads to increase her general knowledge. One says: "It seems to me an erroneous idea that when a woman reaches mature years, thoughts of reading, and of the development to be gained through it, should be put away along with childish things. . . . A woman, if she cannot read much, can read a little. She can pore over a favorite book, a poem, or even a sentence till it becomes a part of her. Culture depends not so much on many opportunities as on making the fullest use of what we have. The best in life is making the most of all things whether they be material or the abiding things of the spirit." To the woman with the habit of reading and a mind open to new ideas, there is no limit to her education. Every day is a new teacher

with fresh lessons for her to learn. And if her early education has been neglected, she does not despair. Every farmer knows that crops grow better when they are planted in the spring—but if something happens that he does not get a field planted at that time, he does not let it lie fallow all summer on that account. He goes to work and plants a late crop of something that will add to his income from the farm. So the farm woman puts in her late crop of ideas and often gains more real culture than women who have had every educational opportunity.

Books for Children

The farm child needs his own library as an incentive to forming the reading habit, and the farm women are always much interested in children's books. They wish the boys and girls to enjoy reading, and yet not waste their time on literary trash. But the building up of a good child's library in the home is a serious problem when so little money is available. Some mothers give each child a book for a birthday present every year, beginning with a gay-colored Mother Goose or other baby classic on the first birthday, so that the library grows as the children grow. One woman reports that in her family the children worked puzzles, wrote articles and letters and sent in their handiwork to the farm papers, often winning books for prizes. Others teach their children to spend a certain part of the money that they earn, on good books which will be enjoyed by all the family.

The ideal child's library should include a good range of books suitable for both boys and girls and some which will interest grown people as well. No one can make a satisfactory list for any one else because we all have our special favorites, but the following list of twenty-five books will suggest those desirable for the country child's collection. They are books which can be read again and again and yet be found interesting. These selections were made by teachers and librarians for the American Library Association as a Shelf of Books for a One-Room School:

"Little Women," Alcott; "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and "Through the Looking-Glass," Carroll; "Life of Robinson Crusoe," Defoe; "Adventures of Tom Sawyer," Twain; "Treasure Island," Stevenson; "Boy's Life of Abraham Lincoln," Nicolay; "The Jungle Book," Kipling; "Fairy Tales," Andersen; "Æsop's Fables"; "Merry Adventures of Robin Hood," Pyle; "Child's Garden of Verse," Stevenson; "Tales from Shakespeare," Lamb; "Arabian Nights' Entertainment," edited by Dixon; "Boys' King Arthur," Lanier; "Story of Mankind," Van Loon; "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm," Wiggin; "Home Book of Verse for Young Folks," Stevenson; "Christmas Carol," Dickens; "Rip Van Winkle and The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," Irving; "Mother Goose"; "Hans Brinker," Dodge; "Boys' Life of Theodore Roosevelt," Hagedorn; "Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys," Hawthorne; "Wild Animals I have Known," Seton; "Heidi," Spyri. Almost any book dealer will be able to supply these books and, as most of them can be had in cheap editions, the

cost is not very great. Two or three families of children in the same community sometimes buy different books from the list, so that they can pass them around and enjoy reading them all.

These books will suggest others to add to the library. A boy who has really enjoyed "Tom Sawyer," for instance, will not rest till he has secured "Huckleberry Finn." Or if he delights in the "fight on every page" in "Treasure Island," he will want "Kidnapped"; the "Jungle Book" will lead to the "Second Jungle Book," etc. To this general list of books should always be added the nature books on flowers, trees, birds, and butterflies, a good dictionary and, if possible, an encyclopedia, which should be in every country child's library. If the income of the family does not allow the purchasing of books for the children, many of these can be secured for reading from the school, county, state or community library.

Periodical Literature

A recent study of 1034 farm homes in Nebraska shows that practically every farm home in the state receives some kind of newspaper. Most of these were the country weeklies and daily papers from the nearer cities—about three-fourths of the homes having a daily paper. Farm papers went to three-fourths of the homes, and more than half had more than one; a few had as many as six. So that, in these homes studied, the news side and the "dollar side" of life were pretty well taken care of. But the woman's side of the home was much

neglected, except in so far as it was covered in the farm papers. There were women's magazines in only one home in four, general magazines in one in five, and children's magazines in one in thirty-three—though probably the children who attended Sunday School received some kind of Sunday School paper. Nebraska may not be in some respects quite typical of American farm home conditions, but at least the study indicates that reading is very general in the farm homes.

I think that women's magazines must be more common in farm homes than this Nebraska study indicates, for nearly all the women who write me mention one or more of them in listing their reading. Some of these may be borrowed from neighbors, however, as the farm woman does not always feel free to spend money on a periodical which does not affect the "dollar side" of the farm life. Yet they are greatly interested in the cultural and inspirational side of life. Many of them criticize the farm papers for not giving more attention to their needs. The farm papers, one says, are "too full of prose," they do not have jokes enough or enough stories for the children or good talks to parents, or general news. They would like to see a real farm home paper which would give a considerable part of its space to the interests of the women and the children—not just put them off with a "page" among the advertisements. In the women's magazines they like a number of short articles which can be read in a few minutes between the household tasks. Good, clean, inspiring stories that the children can read, nature stories, travel stories, and scientific articles are thought de-

sirable. And some of them mention a "When you go to the city" page so that they can keep up with the times in city affairs. They would like more attention given to the home needs of women who have very little money to spend, and success stories about country people as well as city people.

An Oklahoma woman says: "We like to know how folks live on farms in other States, and other parts of our own State—what sort of climate they have and can they raise flowers. We want real stories, not air castles or wails from disgruntled homesteaders—just real homey letters that read like a face to face talk with a neighbor." For the children they would like a section about pets, sports, nature study, and the like, finger plays for the very little ones and a good puzzle and contest department. They say that very often the women's magazines which are put on the "club lists" with farm papers do not satisfy them at all. They find that usually they get more for their money if they order one of the well-known women's magazines which does not give so large a reduction in its rates. Yet they complain, too, that the big women's magazines do not give as much space to the country woman's interests as they should, in proportion to the number of country subscribers. They think the editors ought to be able to find more good stories about country life which would show the country woman herself in action and teach the city woman something of what a country woman's problems are.

The children's magazines were seldom mentioned in the letters, probably because most of the better ones cost

more than the farmer can afford to pay. And if a woman hesitates about spending money on a woman's magazine or a general magazine, she naturally does not feel that she can well afford one for the children alone. She feels that the little money available for the children's reading is better spent on books than on magazines. Yet she desires periodical reading for her children and repeatedly urges that the women's magazines give more space to children's stories, prize contests, and the like. As the children grow older, she may interest them in the young people's magazines and urge them to spend a part of the money they make, for the subscriptions. Since some of these magazines also carry a department for the little children, the least ones in the family are not altogether unprovided for.

Free Literature

Few farm women realize what a very useful person a Congressman or United States Senator can be in the way of keeping them in touch with the work of the Government departments in Washington. In fact, I have met two or three women who did not know that the Department of Agriculture dealt with women's work at all! The Government bulletins on agricultural subjects have long been common, if not always popular, upon the farm—the farmer usually receiving them from his Congressman without asking for them. And they have become a large factor in the farm life. I remember in one farm home I visited, when the little four-year-old asked a question which was not answered to his

satisfaction, he remarked, "I fink I 'll send for a bulletin on dat!" And the farm woman should use this method of getting answers to some of the questions that bother her. These bulletins on home problems are free or cost but a few cents, and bring the latest scientific methods of home work to the housewife. Many of the general welfare organizations also put out excellent booklets, charts, etc., at such a low price that they are available to every woman. So that the woman on the farm can collect a considerable library of high-class information about her work and interests for only a dollar or two. Some of these publications are listed in The Farm Woman's Bookshelf in the back of this book.

For those who wish to undertake a general course of reading, some of the State universities have established home reading courses, and the Nebraska Agricultural College includes a reading course in American literature in its regular extension work. The most comprehensive group of courses, however, is directed by the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C. Twenty-seven courses in all are listed, including: Reading for Parents, Reading for Boys, Reading for Girls, Thirty Books of Great Fiction, Thirty World Heroes, American Literature, Thirty American Heroes, Teaching, Agriculture and Country Life, Sixty Selected Stories for Boys and Girls, and Poetical Literature for Boys and Girls. On request an application for enrolment is sent, and a booklet describing and listing the books to be read. A summary of each book read is required. And when one of the courses is finished, a

certificate is awarded showing the work that has been accomplished. The books required are not furnished but can usually be secured through some library in the state.

Libraries

In recent years many of the State libraries have established an extension service for the country people. Some of them will send a box of fifty or sixty books to a community organization or to some responsible person—the books to be passed around for general reading. Others have a parcel post service by which they furnish books to country people, the borrower paying postage both ways. Still others have prepared packages of books and clippings on various subjects, and these are sent free—the postage in this case being very little. In this way the farm family can receive a supply of books for general reading and special study clubs and community organizations can have books selected to meet their needs. To learn what library service is available in your own State, write to the State Library Commission at the State capitol and ask for information.

County libraries have been established lately in some of the States. These give a mail service on all rural routes in the county, send out a book automobile or a book wagon to make a house to house delivery in the country districts, send traveling libraries to the rural schools, and establish branch libraries or stations in the villages. Thus everybody in the county who wishes to read has good reading at his command from the county

library. These libraries are supported by a county library tax. It is to be hoped that some day some Carnegie who loves rural communities as well as the cities will establish free traveling libraries for the country people. A community library is an excellent memorial to a local man who has become wealthy, and a number of good Americans have used this method of keeping their memory green in the country districts.

Little community libraries are often established by a group of women who are most interested in securing good reading for their families. Sometimes they collect funds by giving entertainments and use the money to establish a shelf of books in the home of some woman who is willing to take the trouble to check up on the books borrowed. Sometimes one energetic woman undertakes this service, banding the boys and girls of the community into a little society to raise funds for the books they want to read. Especially in the small village this is a service which is often of great importance in the lives of the young people. Parent-Teacher Associations sometimes start a school shelf of books which later becomes a general community library. In South Dakota the State furnishes a few books every year to each country school library. In a Minnesota community in which there are many farmers of foreign birth, the community library established by the local Farmers' Club has been a means of bringing about a more neighborly feeling. Fifty books were bought, twenty-five in English and twenty-five in foreign languages. The foreigners were delighted to have books which they could read and, as their children borrowed the English books,

some of them began learning to read English. And all of them felt more at home with their American neighbors because of the interest the Farmers' Club had shown in them.

The local book circle is a means of securing good reading matter when only a few women are interested. Each woman pays a fee, usually a dollar, and with this money a committee buys books for the circle, choosing from lists which the members have furnished. The books are then passed from one to another, the exchange being made every two weeks or every month, so that in the course of a year each member reads all the books owned by the circle. Then the books are sold, divided among the members, or perhaps donated to the local library if there is one. Miss Chastina Gardner in *The Farmer's Wife* describes such a club of twenty-six women as it has worked for forty years in a small town in New York. Most country neighborhoods would have a smaller circle and probably the women would not care to read so many books a year, but otherwise the plan is quite practical for the open country. In winter the books can be sent from one to another by parcel post.

At the beginning of the club year, we buy and distribute twenty-six books, plan a circuit, and once a fortnight each member passes her book to the next one on the circuit and receives a book from the member whose name precedes hers on the list.

The organization is the simplest possible. There are no officers, no by-laws, no meetings. The membership is divided into four groups of five members each and one group of six.

These groups act in successive years as committees to secure new books.

The first duty of the committee is to ask each member to submit a list of books desired. The committee compares these lists and all books called for by more than one member are especially noted. Care is also taken to secure at least one book from each list. Then two or three members of the committee make a visit to the nearest bookstore where an experienced dealer aids with advice and suggestions. Thirty to thirty-five books are usually selected and sent on approval to be looked over by the committee. From these the requisite twenty-six are selected and any undesirable or superfluous volumes are returned. By purchasing in this way, favorable terms are secured. Two small books are often passed together.

At the end of the club year the books are disposed of by auction. Sometimes we limit the sale to members and sometimes allow others to buy, as seems desirable. The books which seem expensive to buy are usually the ones which bring the highest figures at the auction sale. The proceeds from the auction and from any fines are applied toward the bill for the new books.

Inside the paper cover of each book we paste a list of the dates on which that book is to be passed on by each member, something as follows:

"A fine of five cents will be charged for failure to mark the date of passing this book, and five cents for each day it is kept overtime.

Mrs. Brown .....Jan. 6.—
Mrs. Adams .....Jan. 20.—
Mrs. White .....Feb. 3.—"

The Committee collects these slips at the auction and charges the fines to the guilty parties. The system of fines is necessary to prevent delays in passing books.

These are some of the practical methods by which the country women of America have secured good reading for their families. No doubt there are many other ways of which I have not heard. For the farm women believe firmly that a good book is one of the best and most inspiring things in life. They are determined to have it for their children—and when they are really determined, they succeed in spite of everything. They feel, with Emily Dickinson, that:

> There is no frigate like a book
> To take us miles away,
> Or any courser like a page
> Of prancing poetry.
> Such traverse may the poorest take
> Without oppress of toll;
> How frugal is the chariot
> That bears the human soul.

CHAPTER XI

THE COMMUNITY

IN any study of the release of time and energy from accustomed tasks, one may well ask what is to be done with the time saved, but the country woman has no difficulty in answering that question. She knows that what she and her family need most of all is a broader contact with people, and the time and energy to make the influence of the community as a whole good instead of bad. Gradually the home, even the farm home, is losing many of its functions to the community, and if the homemaker is to keep her hands upon the reins of her family's life, she must enter into the community work. She cannot keep her boy away from the young loafers in the nearest village, nor from the village motion-picture house. The family health is endangered by every case of typhoid fever in the neighborhood, and the food supply by unsanitary conditions in the village grocery store. And the farm family cannot live a healthy and happy life unless all the other people are living healthy and happy lives also.

One of the most interesting developments in country life in the last few years has been the growing community consciousness. The patriotic endeavors during the World War led the people generally to act together

and think together on their common problems more than they had ever done before. Many of them realized for the first time how much which is impossible to individual effort can be accomplished by coöperation. In the economic field, the farmers had always felt that the unorganized country man was continually imposed upon by the highly organized commercial interests and this had brought the development of coöperative marketing groups in many parts of the country. Now, however, many farm communities are formulating complete programs for their activities along social, educational and economic lines, because they believe in a general pull together of all the forces. And a spirit of coöperation makes so much difference in the life of a country community that many farmers inquire very closely into the local attitude before they decide to buy a farm in the neighborhood. If the spirit of the people is progressive, they feel that their children will have a good social, educational and religious background; if it is not, the local institutions are likely to become run-down and inefficient.

Farm Women's Clubs

Groups of farm women have in many country places been the leaders in good works in community affairs. These clubs vary greatly in the vigor of the organization, the purposes for which they are formed, and the number of members, but all do some kind of work for the general welfare. Probably the most highly organized farm women's clubs are those in Ohio, formed under the

leadership of Miss Harriet Mason, associate editor of the *Ohio Farmer*. These clubs undertake a definite line of study each year in addition to their neighborhood activities. For many years this study was on home economics topics, until the university extension work had fully developed this line of information. This year they are studying a travel course, to learn about other people and other parts of the country. The State library makes up a list of books bearing on the monthly topics and these books are available to club members on payment of postage both ways. Railway folders also furnish a good source of information about the scenic attractions of the sections through which they pass. These clubs have a state organization called the Ohio Farm Women's Club Federation, and this in turn is affiliated with the Ohio Federation of Women's Clubs.

The extension service of many of the State agricultural colleges foster clubs of farm women, primarily for the study of the leaflets on home and country life distributed from the college. These have grown into community welfare clubs in many instances. New York was a pioneer in this kind of organization and has accomplished a great deal for rural life, particularly in its insistence on the study of the local history and civic problems. A recent list of the New York community programs includes excellent suggestions upon: A Study of our Neighborhood, Our School, Our Churches, Our Library, Our Boys and Girls: Their Health and Recreation, and Our Organizations.

The Kansas State agricultural college has developed the Kansas Homemakers' Clubs, their 1924 program

emphasizing community health. Subjects assigned for the meetings are: Home and Community Health, Prevention of Contagious Diseases, Practical Disinfection, Health Habits (Posture), Special Diseases, Emergencies, The Home Medicine Cabinet, The Child Health Movement, The Hot Lunch, Child Labor, Infant Mortality.

The Nebraska extension service has a particularly practical and comprehensive service on community topics which it renders to any club in the State applying for it, provides a yearbook and excellent programs with the extension circulars as a basis and additional references to books and magazine articles. The topics suggested for the year are: Hot Lunches for Rural Schools, How and When to Tell the Story of Life, Story Telling and the Child's Library, What the Woman Should Know about Business Affairs, Child Welfare Work, the Home Environment, Music, Reading and Pictures in the Home, Meals for All Occasions, Play for the Child and the Grown Up, Facts about China Ware.

Other State colleges have similar programs and these place in the hands of the country woman leader good material on many phases of her local problems. For programs suggesting the use of books and magazines, an arrangement with the State Library is usually made by which the local clubs can be supplied with the necessary literature at the least possible expense. For this reason any country woman does well to follow in her own organization the programs suggested by the extension service.

The following list, gathered from hundreds of letters

of country women reporting the activities of their local women's clubs, will serve to indicate the scope of their efforts for local community betterment. In most cases, the improvement was undertaken by the women because it seemed the thing most urgent—it was the thing which their hands found to do—and they accomplished it in addition to their regular study programs:

Established rest-room in the village, in coöperation with a club of village women.

Set up markers for points of local historical interest.

Held community entertainments, community fairs, automobile pageant of organizations, tableaux, amateur theatricals and historical pageants.

Insisted upon—and sometimes furnished the funds for —the teaching of home economics and manual training in the country schools.

Organized a hunt for animal pests, and furnished the dinner for the workers.

Established "Road Working Day," and furnished lunches for the workers.

Organized paint-up and clean-up campaigns.

Arranged for medical and dental inspection in the schools, hired a community nurse, furnished a hospital room, helped with Red Cross work.

Improved the local cemeteries.

Held community Christmas trees with carol singing. Held regular community sings.

Bought 100 trays, spoons and folding-chairs, which could be borrowed for large affairs by any one in the neighborhood.

Planted shade trees along the roads.

Coöperated with city women's organizations for the marketing of garden products.

General Farm Organizations

The Grange—Of all the farm organizations, the Grange stands preëminent in the opportunity it has given the country woman for her own development and for service to the community. One of its founders was a woman, Miss Carrie A. Hall, and in the beginning the Order provided that women be received with exactly the same rights and privileges as men. This was a very forward step in 1867 and for a long time the farmers were twitted by the city press about their "petticoat government" in country life affairs. But the American farmer knew the American farm woman and he was not ashamed to recognize her as an equal. And the men of the organization now admit freely that without the help of the women, who clung to the Grange when all hope seemed lost, the Grange would have succumbed after a few years' struggle, as has many another organization intended for rural betterment.

In the past few years I have had the opportunity of meeting many Grange women from all the thirty-five Grange States, and many others have written me their experiences with the organization. They all show that they have learned to think clearly and deeply on social and economic questions, especially those influencing country life, and that they have very definite ideas about the needs of the country community. And they can

express their ideas clearly and forcibly. Since the Grange meeting is like a big family gathering with old and young taking part, speaking becomes easy for them. It is not long before a new woman member is learning to "think upon her feet," as the Grangers put it, and is really enjoying it. A woman from Oklahoma writes me that before joining the Grange she had never listened to the sound of her own voice in public. "But," she added, "I always wanted to do that very thing!" A woman writes me from Illinois, "Many a farm woman has developed from a timid young girl, afraid of her own voice, into a power for good in the community—often entering larger fields, because of the training received in the Grange." The friendly spirit of the meetings gives her a sense of security that bolsters her courage for more difficult tasks. One tells me that: "If I had to speak a piece in the church, I tried it in the Grange first and then profited by the suggestions and criticisms. So I got a big reputation for speaking, that I didn't exactly deserve."

When the annual election rolls around, the Grange woman learns a great deal about politics. Perhaps she enters upon an active campaign for an office for herself. Frequently there is a lively competition between a man and a woman for some coveted position and if she proves herself "the best man" by getting a majority of the votes, she takes a great satisfaction in it. Many of the most efficient lecturers of subordinate Granges are women, and even the bugaboo of parliamentary rules does not deter them from seeking the Mastership. "Some of the most progressive Masters and Lecturers

of the Oklahoma subordinate Granges," I am assured, "are women—country women of ability." After such training they may become Masters or Lecturers of Pomona and State Granges. Twelve of the State Granges have women Lecturers and many women appear in other positions on the official lists. Mrs. Sarah G. Baird was Master of the Minnesota State Grange for many years. Perhaps some day we shall see a woman elected Master of the National Grange.

The Grange woman particularly honors the Grange because it gives her such a good opportunity for improving her mind. However good a man's field is, it will not bring forth good crops without cultivation, wisely reasoned the founders, and one's mind is like his field in needing tillage and seeding for a good harvest. During the lecturer's hour the women often read essays on subjects of interest. They are as much interested in the talks on growing better crops and animals as any man present. The Home Economics committee always sees that a part of every session is devoted to home-making and the care and feeding of children. Other women's interests are given a regular place on the programs. For instance, in winter, poultry raising is discussed: in spring, gardening; and in summer, the canning of fruits and vegetables. New problems can always be brought up by means of the question-box.

Especially in the sparsely settled States where the Grange is almost the only source of culture in the community, a general information program is very popular. One such general plan is known as the "book and country" programs. At one meeting a book, previously

read by the members, is discussed and each member is expected to contribute his own impressions from the reading. At the next meeting some foreign country is the subject and besides the prepared talks, each member contributes from his general knowledge. Sometimes instead of the usual program, the members present a play or pantomime. If it goes well, it can be given in public later for charitable or community purposes. These are but a few of the opportunities for self-education. When I asked one woman about the help she had received in this way, she seemed to think it a foolish question. "It is the same as if you should ask a person if attendance at school or college had helped along those lines," she said.

"Even good seeds are worthless unless they grow," is a good Grange maxim, and the ideas the Grangers get usually bring forth "a good and generous harvest." Nearly every woman with whom I have talked has mentioned the community benefit as one of the best things of the Grange. An Illinois woman writes me: "Before our Grange was organized, there was not a single home within the Grange area which enjoyed any of the so-called modern conveniences, with the exception of one, which had running water in the kitchen. Now practically every Grange home has running water, bathroom, furnace, power of some kind for washing, churning, etc., and many have installed electric power plants for lighting purposes, ironing, vacuum sweepers, etc. In fact, these Grange women have all the conveniences which their city sisters enjoy. Of course, this does not prove that the Grange was entirely responsible for these

changes, but I do know that these subjects were discussed many times during Grange lecture-hour programs. And another significant fact is that we can go into one home after another just outside the Grange membership and still find the old conditions existing."

Frequently, too, the talks on home appliances stimulate the men to action. As a Connecticut woman cannily remarked: "The women may know about home conveniences in some other way but it is in the Grange that the farmers hear about the new devices and appliances—and that is what counts when it comes to getting money to pay for them. The Grange has prompted many a good brother to resolve how much he could do in making his home attractive." The men often take so much interest in installing a good lighting system in the Grange Hall that they decide to put in similar lights in their homes. And the activities of the more progressive members are always a stimulus to the weaker brethren. "When a run-down family joins the Grange," a New England woman says, "they and their surroundings improve by the example of their fellow Grangers." Better schools nearly always follow the organization of a Grange in a community because the women are ready for any scheme of school improvement. One woman writes me that since they have the Grange: "Our children do not walk two or more miles to school with the thermometer below zero. The community sees that a bus, trolley car, or other conveyance is provided." At present the women are urging the inclusion of home economics in every country school and the serving of hot noon lunches for the children.

Very often the outcome of woman's work in the Grange is some form of coöperative buying or marketing. Egg clubs and vegetable-hamper clubs are formed to sell direct to the city consumer. As one says, "Country people who have learned to meet together and to eat together soon learn to work together." When one considers the handicaps under which the country woman has worked, the distances to the meetings (often with a poor conveyance), her dependence on weather and road conditions, the over-crowded lives of the persons she seeks to influence, and her own timidity because she so seldom got away from home, it seems remarkable that she has accomplished so much. If in the next fifty years, with all the new facilities for travel and communication, she keeps up to her past record, she will accomplish miracles indeed.

The Farm Bureau—The Farm Bureau was thought of in the beginning as strictly a man's organization—though women managers of farms and women farm owners were welcomed to their meetings and to their coöperative marketing groups, and some of the farmers brought their wives along to help them discuss the farm problems. But there was no especial place for the country women to take hold. More recently, however, in many communities the local Farm Bureau has expanded its work to include the women and they have worked out very excellent programs. The women of the organization, whether organized as a section of the Farm Bureau or as a separate Home Bureau, work chiefly with the home demonstration agent who renders to the home much the same kind of service rendered the farmers by

the agricultural agent. They also, in some sections, study the programs prepared by the college of agriculture extension service.

But for the most part their work has been the disseminating among the members of the latest scientific information upon homemaking and women's farm projects, by means of meetings with the demonstration agents, special meetings for the making of dress forms, hat-making, sewing, etc., study of the agricultural and homemaking bulletins, and lectures by specialists in various subjects. There has been no general policy, so far as I can learn, for the developing of community life through the organization.

Yet, because of the fact that each local unit is entirely free to develop its own program, it is likely that in some places the women have developed definite community ideals. For country women generally are not to be held to a strictly self-improvement program. They see the human side of things and the need of country people for social development, and for coöperation in the community for the sake of all its members. A farm woman from Tennessee reports that, at the regular meetings of her Farm Bureau unit, lunch is served at one of the homes, and that one big luncheon (probably including most of the community) is held in winter, and a big picnic in midsummer. The Farm Bureau Club of Swan Valley, Idaho, has developed a community recreation program.

The great emphasis of the Farm Bureau has been upon better marketing of the farm products, and in this the women have been intensely interested. Women

from all over the country have written me of the benefits they have gained by coöperative selling. In many places they have opened a Farm Bureau market at the nearest town where the women can sell their products under the best possible conditions. In other places they have developed large "egg circles," and vegetable hamper circles to ship direct to city families. In connection with this work, they have had the expert service of the home demonstration agent and the agricultural agent in developing new products which will be profitable and find a ready sale among the city people. Since the greatest handicaps of country life are the low income from the farms and the difficulty of keeping in practical touch with new scientific ideas, this service is of great value.

Other Organizations—So far as I have been able to discover, the other farm organizations do not have very definite plans for the country women's work. The women often attend the meetings, take part in the discussions and vote on organization questions, but seldom hold office or assist in working out the plans for the organization. Their local work consists in taking up any immediate project which they think desirable or in helping the men in their work. In the Farmers' Union a woman's booth is placed in the coöperative markets, where the country women sell cooked food and garden products.

Recently there has been a tendency toward local organizations for community purposes only. These usually have no requirements for membership except a small fee for running expenses. They meet in the schoolhouse, or other public building and hold community forums,

pageants, entertainments, and other general neighborhood affairs. These loosely-constructed welfare organizations have done a great deal of good in some neighborhoods, particularly in stirring the people to a general community consciousness, but they tend to go to pieces after a time because of their lack of definite purpose. If a close-knit organization could be developed, with definite ideals, it might bring the solution of many country-life problems.

Boys' and Girls' Clubs

The most important organizations of country boys and girls are the Boys' and Girls' Clubs developed by the State departments of extension in coöperation with the Department of Agriculture. There are now some 457,000 farm boys and girls enrolled in these groups throughout the country. The chief purpose of the clubs is to instruct the young people in scientific agriculture and homemaking, but the boys and girls usually find the work financially profitable, and socially profitable as well, since the meetings and trips bring them together frequently. The work in the home-making projects has tended to develop the social side more fully because sewing, cooking, etc., can be done in groups. Some of the projects which have been most popular are, the raising of pigs, calves, colts, and poultry; the growing of corn, tomatoes, and potatoes; canning, bread-making, cake-making, sewing and redecorating rooms. Many of the boys and girls carry on several projects at the same time, and the versatility of the country young

person is shown by the fact that both boys and girls are in most of the groups. Many girls are interested in raising livestock—the national champion in stock judging in 1923 was a girl. And the boys sometimes undertake cake baking or canning.

Most of the boys and girls find the work profitable because, under the instruction of the extension worker or the county agent, they are taught to use the best and most economical methods. The winner of the contests usually gets a considerable amount of money in prizes. It is said that one Tennessee girl received $353 in prizes for her champion calf, and sold the calf for $140. One of the boys in a pig club won $50 in prizes with his pig. And a girl in Virginia is said to have $10,000 worth of livestock from her work in various club projects. The girls in the home-making projects win prizes, and in addition have the articles to sell or to use in the home. It is this financial side of the work which has so much interested the country boys and girls, who see in the club projects an opportunity to do something worth while and to make money for a college education or for other purposes.

Sometimes the prizes take the form of scholarships to the State agricultural college. And frequently the prize is a trip to the State fair, to the agricultural college, the national dairy show, or to Washington, D. C.—a great experience for the country boy or girl. Some of the girls from the canning clubs were given a trip to France to demonstrate American canning methods to the French people. In connection with the work of the project, the members are trained in the keeping of

careful accounts of the cost of production, reckoning their own labor and the time spent upon the study of the subject. This gives them excellent business training for future work in farming or homemaking.

In some of the States the boys' and girls' clubs go camping in the summer time and while at camp are carefully trained in all the Four-H's—head, hand, health, and heart—and are given wholesome outdoor life and recreation. The camp of the West Virginia clubs at Jackson's Mills is a permanent one and the boys' and girls' clubs from the different counties are raising funds for comfortable cabins. But the best training given by the Four-H Clubs is that in the community spirit. Country boys and girls who would otherwise grow up almost without playmates of their own age are brought together in groups where they can work together and play together until they develop a sense of group responsibility toward the various activities.

Coöperative Marketing

One of the important points of contact is in the coöperative marketing of products, a method which has become common in many country districts in the last few years. The organizations for this purpose vary from the simple "egg circles" of the women to large coöperative concerns which are capitalized at many thousands of dollars and which employ salaried shippers and packers.

One of the most popular forms of coöperative work

for women is the "egg circle." The women of the neighborhood form an organization for the study of poultry-raising and the marketing of their poultry products. Frequently they also do coöperative buying of feed and other supplies. They contract with a good market in the city to supply strictly high-class eggs, at a price somewhat above the current price in the village. Each member is furnished with a stamp with the name of the egg circle and a number identifying the eggs, so that in case a bad egg is shipped it can be traced to the owner. Or sometimes one member undertakes to handle the eggs, grade, candle, stamp, pack and ship them to market for a fee of two or three cents a dozen. As in all coöperative associations it is necessary to have a leader who has real business ability, and to establish a small sinking fund for unexpected expenses. Since on most farms the production and selling of eggs and poultry has long been the best immediate possibility of increasing the income, these egg circles can do much to improve the farm home. They handled many thousands of dozens of eggs in the past year. Live chickens, dressed chickens—prepared according to instructions given by an extension lecturer—baby chicks, and other poultry are also marketed in much the same way. Sometimes the women specialize in one breed of chickens so that their poultry products will be of consistent high quality.

Other groups of women prefer to market canned goods, jellies, jams, etc. For the purposes of coöperative selling, it is necessary that they specialize on a few kinds and all follow the same recipe carefully, so that

the product will be standardized. The South Carolina Home Producers' Association limit their output to ten varieties: blackberry jam, plum jelly, artichoke relish, fig preserves, grape juice, soup mixture, Dixie Burgoo, Brunswick stew, Pine Bark fish stew, and butter. These products are prepared from special recipes, put up in special containers and sold under the label of the Association. In one year they sold products to the value of $22,000.

A Farm Bureau group in Ohio has begun a coöperative canning business, specializing on apple butter, beans, and bantam corn. Groups in fruit-growing districts specialize on jellies, jams and fruit butters, and in truck-growing districts on home-canned tomatoes, corn, beans, etc., and on many varieties of pickles. If possible it is wise to develop some distinctly local product from some famous recipe, which can become identified with the Association in the minds of the buyers. As city people are always eager for some new food to vary the diet, a good trade can be worked up if the product is high-class and palatable. Needless to say, the women of a group selling canned goods must all be expert cooks, for an occasional bad can will do much to hurt the sale of the product.

Other groups of women open a general coöperative market, or a stall in some city market where many kinds of products are sold on a small commission. In one county in Tennessee they have two markets a year, before Thanksgiving and before Easter, when they sell for three days all sorts of farm products, also quilts, rugs, aprons, dresses, fancy work, baskets, and other hand-

made articles. During these sales the Farm Bureau women serve a seventy-five cent dinner to the townspeople as an extra money-making project, and this has been very profitable. Many of them succeed in making money out of the sale of flowers, dahlia and gladiolus and peony roots, and well-rooted small plants for transplanting. In these markets, also, distinctive articles are profitable because many people like to send as presents something representing the local handicrafts. Sometimes suggestions for this trade can be given by the older people of the community who know the old quilt patterns, weaving patterns, and the secrets of the old-fashioned dyeing.

In some sections the home demonstration agents have assisted in establishing a local industry, as in one county in Mississippi where the women have found a ready sale for baskets made from the needles of the long-leaf pines, from the honeysuckle stems and from splints and honeysuckle stems combined. The sales of these baskets alone amounted to more than $2,500 in a year. An Iowa group has sold hundreds of dollars' worth of cucumber pickles put up by a special recipe. The women say that they really enjoy selling their products in the cooperative markets. They are with their friends and neighbors, and the city women stop to buy, and then stay to visit awhile, unless the selling is too pressing. The country women pass on their recipes for salads and other foods, and learn how the city women cook things and what they require in food products. Very often a city woman makes a suggestion for some special product which, through her advertising it among her

friends, becomes very profitable to the country woman.

The country women say that their work in coöperative circles gives them fine training in teamwork. In joining the group each member is under obligation to conform honestly to a high standard of products, and to follow all the rules carefully for the sake of the good name of the group, even though she loses some money by so doing. She is morally bound, if not legally, to stay with her group even when she could receive a higher price elsewhere, for the sake of future benefits she and the others may receive. This is often a trying issue, for nearly always the formation of a vigorous cooperative group raises the local price temporarily and it requires a great deal of loyalty for the women to keep on selling through the coöperative at a lower figure. Yet it pays in the long run, for if the coöperative were to fail, the local price would soon drop to its former low level. And it is very necessary that personal feeling should not creep in. The members of the group are admitted because of their products, and the quality of the product must always be the point at issue—the quality to be judged always by the most exact scientific standards.

Community Projects

One of the first needs of many rural neighborhoods to-day is a good doctor and hospital facilities within automobile distance of the farms. One of the handicaps to living in the country has always been the general lack of hospital and medical service, and this has

been more noticeable than ever in the recent shortage of country doctors. Some communities are paying a considerable bonus each year in order to have a good doctor within reach. County hospitals have been established, largely through local efforts in many of the States, but even these may not be sufficiently near all the country districts. The great need is for a hospital equipped to handle accident cases, which might without immediate attention cause death or permanent injury, and many of the women's organizations are busy developing the community interest in such an institution. When the community interest has been awakened, the nearest doctor usually arranges for the coöperation of the State Department of Health and the United States Public Health Service in working out a hospital plan suited to the local needs, and the whole community takes part in the drive for the funds necessary to establish it. A county or community nurse is also a great benefit to the local people because by care and insistence on quarantine she keeps in check diseases which would greatly lower the health rate of the neighborhood.

Since the problems of the daily work in one farm home are the same as those in other homes in the neighborhood, in thickly settled communities many of the burdens of the housewife can be lifted by community effort. In some sections, electrical power for the farm home can best be provided by a coöperative plant in the nearest village to supply the village people as well as the farm homes within a radius of five miles. A cooperative creamery and cheese factory will lift many

burdens from the woman on the dairy farm, and in connection with it can be installed a small ice plant and a neighborhood laundry. Bakeries and ice-cream factories, so located that they can serve a considerable territory, have also been successful in some neighborhoods. The rural telephone system is usually a coöperative enterprise. When the woman on the farm can have all the electrical conveniences for the home, send her clothes to the community laundry with the cream on Monday morning and have them returned fresh and clean on Wednesday, can keep her ice box running regularly, and buy the family butter supply from the creamery, she will certainly believe that the millennium has arrived. And yet all these projects have been carried out in farming communities in America, and it seems likely that they will become far more common in the next few years.

A rest room in the nearest market place is usually the result of coöperation between the neighborhood farm woman's clubs and civic clubs of the town. The idea is for the country women to have somewhere to go when in town, to rest or wait for their husbands, to leave packages, make their children comfortable, eat their lunches, and drink a cup of tea. In some localities the town organizations provide a suitably located room with equipment, while the country women help pay the wages of the matron to keep it in order. Or the town women may take turns in being hostess at the rest room. If a matron is in charge, she can manage in addition a small library, a woman's exchange for cookery and handwork, a lunch counter, or something else to help pay

for her time. Sometimes one of the principal stores at which the country women deal is glad to furnish a room for their use. Such a rest room is almost a necessity at the trading center for the farmers. That it is appreciated is shown by the fact that sometimes as many as a thousand farm women use it in the course of a month.

Community buildings are being erected in many of the more prosperous farming sections, to be used for all community purposes. They are financed usually by voluntary contributions or by the efforts of one of the leading rural organizations. When built, they are maintained by dues, fees, rentals, receipts from entertainments, etc. In some communities, much of the material for the building and much of the labor are voluntary contributions. The people take a great pride in "our house" and have more pleasure in using it because their hands have helped in building it for the community welfare. Frequently the women are the moving spirits in agitating the question of a community house, in furnishing the meals for the workers, holding entertainments to secure money, and generally keeping the men at the task until it is finished.

The farm woman in most country places takes a great interest in the county fair. For one thing, it gives her somewhere to go to meet with other people, and it gives her an opportunity to enter the work of her hands in the contests for prizes. In recent years, the local fair is becoming educational as well as entertaining. At some of the fairs, for instance, the farm women have made wonderful exhibits of their accomplishments. A

properly equipped kitchen is a favorite display, with all the equipment grouped as it should be. A well-selected and packed school lunch is shown, with mimeographed recipes and directions to be distributed. Good exhibits of home dressmaking, dyeing, millinery, quilt-making and basketry are common. And in addition to the displays of jams, jellies, pickles, and canned goods, the women have established a sales-booth at some fairs, at which they dispose of a large quantity of such products to city visitors.

Besides their exhibits of perfect canned products, the women of Delaware last year exhibited spoiled and poorly packed vegetables and fruits, with cards telling what had caused the trouble, and this display created a great deal of interest. The farm girls are proud to display the rugs, curtains, furniture covers, and bed-spreads they have made for their rooms. Sometimes they even fit up two bedrooms for display—one carelessly furnished, the other, with no more expensive furniture, an artistically furnished room.

Scoring the Community

The West Virginia University extension department has recently worked out a system of scoring communities, as horses or cattle are scored—with a certain rating given to a definite number of points. This has created a great deal of interest in the rural communities in the State which vie with each other in improving the score before the next test is applied by the extension workers. No one likes to see his rival community get

the better of him. And many communities which had run down from lack of interest in their affairs have taken the up-grade. Extension workers in other States are beginning to use this system for the building up of country neighborhoods. The scoring system is worked out in detail under ten heads: 1. Community Spirit, 2. Citizenship, 3. Recreation, 4. Health, 5. Homes, 6. Schools, 7. Churches, 8. Business, 9. Farm-Field Crops, 10. Farm-Livestock. Each division has a possible 100 points, with from three to eight subdivisions, and any community interested in knowing where it stands can easily check up these points for itself.

CHAPTER XII

SOCIAL LIFE

THE farmer himself may be an individualist, but the farmer's wife never is. She has a natural liking for social contacts just as has every other woman the world over. In the old days of the westward-going pioneers as the family caravan painfully struggled up the mountain trail which led to the boundless West, the man looked forward eagerly to what lay on before. But the white-faced women and girls in their sunbonnets, strained their eyes for a long look backward toward the friends and neighbors they were leaving forever. They were not less courageous than the man of the family, but they knew a much keener grief for the loss of old companionships and all the social pleasures which a woman holds dear.

And ever since pioneer days the woman on the farm has somehow managed, with all her heavy tasks, to find time for social activities. Wherever she has felt that she could gain for her family a mental or spiritual food which the home could not well provide, she has been absolutely untiring and undiscouraged in her labors to secure it for her family. To her determined leadership is due the existence of almost every rural church in America. And social organizations, like the Grange,

have survived in the rural districts where so many economic organizations have failed, because the woman on the farm saw in them something her family needed, and she clung to them with a grip of steel. The story is told of one courageous Ohio woman who, when everyone else in the community gave up the local Grange, went each month to the meeting-place, called the roll of the absent members, wrote up the reports, paid the dues from her butter and egg money, and kept on for months until the other members, perhaps growing ashamed of themselves when they saw her devotion to the cause, began to drift back. And that subordinate Grange later became an important force for good in the community. So the country woman stands preëminent in our rural social development because nothing in which she was really interested has ever failed.

In social affairs, the country woman thinks chiefly of the needs of her children. Every mother knows that a child is full of a tremendous energy which has great powers for good or evil. He must be doing something every minute that he is awake, and if he is too much repressed he is certain to explode into serious mischief of some kind. In early childhood the work and play and freedom of the farm life give him a sufficient outlet for his high spirits, but as he grows older and begins to desire the company of other children, he becomes a real problem. In the old days, the farmer's attitude often was to wear out this abundant energy with a long day's work in the fields "to keep him out of devilment." Perhaps it did—though many of the stories handed down from that period do not indicate it particularly.

But on the modern farm, the farmer himself does not work such long hours and the boy usually has considerable free time and excess energy to be expended on outside activities. He may go off to the village to be with boys of his own age, and the mother knows only too well the low morals of some of his associates in that unsupervised companionship. But unless she can furnish him with some other recreation, she is powerless against it.

In recent years the country woman has learned that she must extend her activities to the whole community if it is to be a safe place to rear her boys and girls. She has learned that the companions of her boy and girl do not matter so much, so long as they are engaged in some active sport or in supervised recreation. It is when "the gang" goes off behind the barn or loafs about the town garage that the real mischief is likely to be hatched. And because she has comparatively little time for social and educational leadership, she likes to include the whole family in her plans and to serve several purposes at once. So the most popular organizations with the farm woman have been the church, which gives religious training combined with social and educational work; the Grange, which combines the social, educational and economic; the Farm Bureau, with its coöperative marketing and scientific training; and the general community groups which combine community development and patriotic exercises with social training. All of these can be made to include all, or nearly all, the family in some of their activities.

Age and sex group organizations like the Boy Scouts,

the Girl Scouts, the Campfire Girls, the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. have never become very well established in the country districts, perhaps largely because they separate the members of the farm family. The country woman does not have time to foster one organization for Peter, another for Mary, another for John, and another for Nell, and still another for herself and her husband. She much prefers a general organization to which the whole family can go in one trip of the car, and in which she can keep a watchful eye upon the doings of the younger set. Yet these highly specialized organizations for young people have so much good in them, and give so much assistance in directing group activities, that they may well be developed as a part of the general program. The local Grange, for instance, sometimes fosters a troop of Boy Scouts, and the church the Y. W. C. A. and the Y. M. C. A., so that the country young people can profit by their excellent training. And in communities wealthy enough to afford a salaried leader of recreation, these organizations provide well-trained workers to organize the local boys and girls for community purposes.

In the early days the Grange, because it was a secret society, felt it could not include little children among its members. Yet the need of the children for social life was so pressing that the Juvenile Grange was formed and has come to be one of the most important parts of the Order. Children up to five years are allowed to attend the regular Grange with the mother, then they join the Juvenile Grange and have their own exercises under the supervision of a Matron, while the

other meeting is going on. At fourteen they can join the Big Grange, as the children call it, and take part with the adults. So the whole family is provided for in the two meetings. In the Juvenile Grange the children have a simple ritual of their own; they are taught to read and recite and to make little speeches about their pets and sports; they learn the fundamental principles of community and national life, and in other ways are prepared for their future work in the Order. The two meetings often join for the lecturer's hour which is the entertainment program—the children taking part in the exercises while the parents, and frequently the grandparents, look on with great pride and pleasure. A woman says of her father, "I don't know whether he was prouder when his grandchildren began to appear on the children's night programs than he was over his own children, but it certainly was a great gratification to him." Another says of her children, "When they are in the Grange I know they are with the right people and thinking the right things, and that is a great comfort to a mother, I can tell you."

One of the greatest needs of the country person is to "get out and around," to see other people and take part with them in some sort of activity, and the various forms of recreational meetings give this opportunity. There is a difference between amusement and recreation. One may be amused by seeing moving-pictures and ball games, listening over the radio, hearing concerts or attending the theater, but true recreation calls for the person himself to take part in the activity. It is a means of self-development and self-expression

which is particularly enjoyed by young people. But the grown people enjoy it, too. Once they have learned the knack of being merry, they get quite as much fun out of it as do the boys and girls.

In the old days of the pioneers, there were many community parties,—the barn-raisings, husking- and quilting-bees, sugaring-offs, spelling matches, singing-schools, dances, "play parties" and socials, with plenty of chance for participation for young and old. But the changing conditions of agriculture and country life have caused most of these to be given up, and few group activities of equal importance have arisen to take their places. So it is important that we make the most of all the country life frolics which are left to us, develop some others wherever possible, and perhaps re-establish some of those which were popular in the past.

The Field Day

Next after the county fair, probably the best loved country frolic is the field day, or all-day meeting in the open air. The families begin to gather early in the morning with their hampers of food supplies and for eight or ten hours they give themselves over to sociability, recreation and instruction. From the beginning, the Grange used the field day as the best form of country sociability, the church has made use of it often, and every leader of country life recognizes it as a helpful institution. One of the chief advantages of the field day is that all the family can go and take part. Then there is always plenty to eat. One country woman told

me that when she was going to a field day, she figured on three times what the family would ordinarily eat, and multiplied it by four! Many of the women must follow the same plan, for at any country field day that I have attended, the women could provide for an almost unlimited number of basketless visitors—and yet carry home left-over food at night.

The program for the field day can include almost anything. Usually there are a few speeches by visiting speakers. The county agent often speaks, and one of the local ministers. There is music by the boys' band or orchestra, the girls sing choruses, and there is an old fiddlers' contest. Nearly always there is a ball-game in the afternoon—sometimes between the boys and the older men of the community. There are running matches, jumping matches, three-legged races, and other track events and every amusing stunt they can think of for the amusement of the spectators. Someone brings a croquet set along and groups of the girls and boys play the game in succession. The older men enjoy themselves pitching horseshoes. Meanwhile the very little children run about wherever they please, amuse themselves with the swings and the sand pile, and when they get tired are put to sleep on blankets in the shade of the trees.

By the time evening comes and the remnants of the supper are packed away, everybody is pretty well worn out with the day's activities, and the tired children fall asleep on the way home. But, one and all, they have gained something from the day's recreation. Old friendships have been renewed and new friendships

begun. The woman who has been busy and neglectful of her neighborly duties makes a promise to herself to see more of Granny Smith this year, to carry cheer and comfort to this family or that, and to arrange for visits between her boy and other boys who have impressed her as desirable companions. She has probably also learned something of advantage about her daily problems—of new conveniences or new short cuts which will make her work somewhat easier in the future. Altogether the field day is looked back upon with pleasure as a worth-while break in the family life.

A recent addition to the field day has been the play festival in which the children, and particularly the girls, take a greater part than before. The play festival may consist of games, singing, folk-dancing, marching, a little pageant, a parade on ponies, calves, and bicycles; or anything else that the children can do and enjoy doing. If it is carefully planned, it is certain to be well received and enjoyed by the grown people as well as by the children.

The Chautauqua

Next after the field day most country people would place the annual week of Chautauqua. It is not, of course, a local undertaking, but there is so much for the people of the community to do in arranging for it, raising funds, and taking part in its activities that it seems almost a neighborhood institution. For the Chautauqua is primarily an outdoor, country enterprise and it draws its annual audience of something

like 35,000,000 people, chiefly from the farms and villages and small towns. It is undoubtedly one of the best means of taking entertainment and instruction to the country districts at small cost. Almost all the Chautauqua companies are good. Each presents a week of varied entertainment and instruction, ranging from lectures on national ideals, and concerts of good music, to talks on homemaking, humorous numbers and story-telling for the children. Nearly all of them present one good play, and train the local people to take part in a simple festival or pageant. Making as it does so wide a variety of appeals, the local Chautauqua not infrequently stimulates the interest of the country boy or girl in some definite direction.

The Community Pageant

The community pageant is nothing but a big series of living pictures or pantomimes in which the local people act out their ideas of local history, just as the little child acts out his idea of the fairy tales—and in both cases the attempt at expression is a great deal of fun. We are all children in our delight in dressing up in queer costumes and playing a part, if we are quite sure our grown-up dignity will not suffer too much in the process, and the community pageant gives just the right opportunity. Nothing can equal the enthusiasm with which the people who have once become interested in pageantry ferret out the details of their history and act the most striking incidents in pageantry episodes.

They suddenly realize that they are a part of the great world, and that down their big road or their main street all the currents of national history have flowed, and will continue to flow for all time to come. They are lifted out of the humdrum of their daily lives in seeing themselves in their relation to great historical events, and this exaltation of spirit has made many a small-town pageant significant and beautiful quite out of proportion to its size and its cost.

Perhaps the best thing about a pageant is that it can be almost infinitely adapted to local conditions. It can use almost any kind of material effectively and can be performed in the particular beauty spot which is the pride of the community. It is often a purely local product. Any local person with some ability for managing people and some artistic ability, who can devote time and energy to the work, can give a fairly successful performance. And the community will have an additional reason for pride in that the entire production has been made at home. Sometimes a young girl just out of college and eager to do something for her home community is the local pageant-manager. She has seen pageants presented at college, and she can learn the general principles of pageantry from books and magazine articles on the subject.

As soon as it has been decided to give a pageant, a meeting is called of all persons who will probably be interested and helpful, and the general plan of organization worked out. Of course the selection of the pageant-manager is of first importance, since he assumes

control of the entire organization and has the final voice on all plans. Usually, it is true, the person who has been instrumental in arousing the local interest in pageantry is chosen, but it gives him confidence to be elected by the general meeting.

The choice of material for the pageant is very important. Most popular in the smaller communities is the historical pageant, made up of significant bits of local history presented in a series of pictures or pantomimes—reviewed and interpreted by the Spirit of the Community, America, or some other symbolic figure. Even though the wording is crude, if the real spirit of the locality is expressed and the historical incidents are well presented, the general effect is good. The young pageant-writer can get many valuable suggestions from pageants written for other communities. Very often a general historical pageant can be adapted to the local history. For instance, a pageant of the westward movement of the pioneers can be adapted to the use of almost any community west of the Alleghanies. In adapting it, the general pioneers are given the names of the first settlers of that locality, the Indian hunter becomes Daniel Boone, Lewis Wetzel, Davy Crockett, or whoever was the local hero in Indian days, Civil War scenes are made to celebrate some local general or other leader, and so on with each episode in the pageant. Such an adaptation is very satisfactory if the pageant-manager has the courage to throw aside everything which does not serve to interpret the life of his own community and to make the necessary additions from the local history.

The symbolic pageant, which presents the life of the community or life in general by means of symbolic figures, is often artistic and beautiful. For this reason symbolic pageants consisting of groups of dancers, graceful pantomimes and colorful processions, have been very popular. But unless good musicians and good teachers of rhythmic dancing are available the historical pageant is the better choice for the small community.

As soon as the pageant has been written or adapted the working out begins. The leaders of the episodes are chosen so that there is a democratic representation of the community. Sometimes each church and each large organization is represented by a group. It is important that these leaders be persons of ability for each is held strictly accountable for the success or failure of her episode. She chooses and trains the players, has charge of any properties that are necessary, and sees that her players are properly costumed for the presentation. It adds greatly to the interest if descendants of the historical persons can represent them in the pageant. Persons for speaking parts should of course have good voices. Any number of persons can be used, the extras serving as a background for those taking part in the action. Too large groups are unwieldy, yet it is desirable to have a few extra persons in each episode, so that the places of players who may drop out at the last moment can be filled by those who are familiar with the action.

At least two meetings of each episode group are held before the first general rehearsal. At the first meeting the leader tells the players the story of the part they are

to give and asks their suggestions for presenting it. All suggestions are tried out until the leader gains some idea of the best form for the action as well as of the persons who are best fitted for the parts. Parts are then assigned and the action is repeated several times. The second meeting is held, if possible, on the ground where the pageant is to be presented. The pageant-manager should be present to assign a place to the group, to criticise the action as planned, to make any suggestions necessary to make the episode fit the rest of the pageant. Then follow two or three rehearsals of the entire cast, when each episode group has an opportunity to perfect its action. The orchestra, which is to play for the pageant, should be present at rehearsals so that the musicians will know exactly what is expected of them. If possible, it is best to have the last rehearsal in costume, with every detail carried out as in the final presentation.

In costuming the pageant, almost the whole community can take part. Old costumes of some of the historical periods represented can usually be found in some of the attics of the neighborhood. The older people will enjoy giving descriptions of the costumes worn in their youth and will lend old swords, Civil War rifles, fans, combs, and other properties of the period for use in the pageant. Effective costumes can be made from inexpensive materials or old materials dyed in artistic shades, and sometimes the local storekeepers will give bolts of material which have been long on their shelves. In general, the important figures in a group are dressed in bright or light colors and persons in the background

in darker and duller shades. Perhaps the local dressmaker will superintend the cutting and fitting of the garments and the women of the neighborhood can help with the sewing. The style of colonial dress is well known, and an effective ball-room scene can be copied from pictures of the period, in old rose, blue, and creamy yellow sateen and gaily flowered cretonnes. It is well to remember, however, that Revolutionary leaders did not attend to business affairs garbed in lace and gay satin. In a pioneer episode, the men wear ill-fitting trousers of gray or brown homespun held up by "galluses" of the same material, over shirts of bright color. The pioneer women wear tight-waisted, full-skirted dresses of dark colors with bright aprons, or bright calico dresses for best wear, Indians wear suits of brown canton-flannel, fringed to simulate buckskin, decorations of bright colors and head-dresses of feathers. Their faces and hands are copper-color, with blue and yellow war paint. If the attics do not yield a good collection of hoop-skirts and blue or gray uniforms for the Civil War episode, the costumes can be copied from old pictures.

Advertising for the pageant can best be done with bright, artistic posters, large enough to attract attention. It will arouse interest to announce small prizes for the best posters made by school children. Newspaper advertising should take the form of little stories about the pageant. Each episode can be written up with the names of persons in the cast and something about the incident they are to portray. Descendants of the early settlers taking part in the pageant, old cos-

tumes, spinning wheels or other historical properties will furnish good news items.

If all has gone well, the final performance is a real community event. The players dress in their costumes at home and their gay presence on the streets and in the crowds on the way to the pageant grounds add to the interest. At the grounds the costumed pages or ushers take care of the seating, the orchestra plays an opening program, everyone is in a holiday humor and eager for the pageant to begin. Long lines of automobiles from the country and neighboring towns are parked near and old friends are greeting one another. Behind the scenes, the Greek goddesses admire the drapery of their costumes, the Civil War general assumes his most military air, the Spirit of the Community adjusts her crown and tries her voice on a few lines, and all the other players begin to enter into the occasion and resolve to do their best before their friends and neighbors. In spite of any slips at the last moment, if the pageant has been well directed, it will be a success and the pageant-manager will receive his full share of praise and appreciation. Some country communities have drawn crowds of 2,500 people to such a local pageant.

The pageant is valuable to the community because it unifies the people by getting every one at work upon a common object. It adds dignity to the local life by showing how national history has found expression in the community at different periods. It gives something in which the young people can take an active part without fear of censure; it helps the middle-aged to renew their youth, and brings a deeper vener-

ation for the old people and their memories of early days. So it is no wonder that a successful pageant always develops a new pride in the community and a desire to make it worthy of its history and increasingly important in the story of the future.

The Little Country Theater

Another opportunity for training the country boys and girls has been developed in the Little Country Theater. This movement first came into prominence with the work of Dr. A. G. Arvold, of the University of North Dakota, who in his work with country boys and girls taught them how to write plays illustrating country life, prepare the necessary scenery and present the action. These became very popular with the young people and with their audiences, and immediately dramatic work was recognized as one of the best forms of recreation for country boys and girls. Some of the extension leaders in other States saw the possibilities of the dramatic method in teaching the latest ideas in agriculture and country life. The University of Minnesota published "Back to the Farm," a three-act play on the value of scientific methods in farming, and "Kindling the Hearthfire," a three-act play on home economics. And Ohio State University published "The Cross-Roads Meetin' House," a three-act play on the country church. These plays were first acted by students at the annual Farmers' Week before hundreds of people, then before many other audiences gathered in town halls, churches, or tents, all over the State.

Later they were presented by groups of community players, and by other college groups in nearly every State in the Union. The New York Agricultural College has also been a leader in dramatic work for rural people and has prepared a very helpful list of plays and books on play production.

A newer feature of the movement is the Little Country Theatre at state and county fairs. Several communities prepare plays for presentation—there is a prize for the best production—and present them in a hall or tent at the fair. A great deal of rivalry develops among the groups and the plays are so popular with the fair crowds that sometimes three performances are given a day. At the Genesee County fair, New York, people stood in line for an hour before each performance, waiting for the Little Theater to open its doors. Several other fairs in New York have these play contests also—the expense of staging, music, and prizes being met by the small fee charged for admission. At the Iowa State fair three one-act plays were staged, with two performances each day, and there were in addition lectures by experts on the art of make-up and of scene-painting.

One of the best uses for dramatics is in the one-act play lasting from fifteen to thirty minutes, which is staged as a part of a community entertainment. It is much easier to prepare than a full evening performance, and gives the young people good training which can be used later in more elaborate productions. Nothing has more reviving power upon a bored organization group than a bit of good acting presented by the people that

they know. Many a Grange lecturer or other community leader has found that a play, however simple, is always the hit of the evening and draws forth more favorable comment than anything else he can furnish for entertainment. And putting on a one-act play for a community gathering is not a very difficult task even for an untrained leader. If the community hall does not have a regular stage a play can be chosen which does not need a stage. Usually some boy will take delight in working out the practical details, and the boy will take more interest in the organization when he finds that such service is appreciated. Some of the simpler plays have been presented under all possible conditions—from the big stage in a city theater before a thousand people, to the corner of somebody's sitting-room before a meeting of the small-town Ladies' Aid Society.

Since "the play's the thing," the first and most important task is the choice of the play, for not only the kind of play but also the setting and the number of persons available to take the parts must be considered. Possible entrances and exits must be taken into account and if no curtain is available, it is best to choose a play without a tableau at the end, so that the players can walk off without embarrassment when the play is finished. Usually the fewer the persons taking part the better because of the difficulty of getting a large number together for rehearsals. Some good plays, however, give an opportunity for the use of several persons without speaking parts and these can be trained in one or two rehearsals with the other members of the cast.

The easiest play to present is a simple comedy with

characters much like ourselves, and its action rising to a good climax which leads the audience to a hearty laugh at the end or to a deeper understanding of some side of life with which they are familiar. Unfortunately, really good one-act plays of this kind are not very numerous—too many of the Little Theater plays requiring elaborate settings or expert acting to be very useful for untrained players. And many short plays deal with the unpleasant sides of life, and so are not desirable for general community meetings.

When the cast is chosen, rehearsals begin at once. If possible, every rehearsal should be held in the hall where the play is to be given, because the entrances and exits and the amount of space to be covered on the stage present real problems to the young player. If this is impossible, part of a room can be blocked off with entrances and exits like those in the community hall. Even at the very first rehearsal, when the players read their parts from the book, they should be put through all the general business of entering and leaving the stage, sitting down and getting up and moving about, just as they are to do it at the final performance. At the second rehearsal, the players should know their parts well enough to go through them with the help of some prompting. Every detail of the acting should be worked out at once. For instance if a man in the cast is to smash a vase in the play, in every rehearsal he should be given a block of wood or something to "smash" with appropriate gestures—reserving, of course, the real vase for the final performance. If a girl is to carry a fan, she should use a fan of some sort in every rehearsal. Indeed, every

player should know exactly what he is to do with his feet and his hands at every moment of the action—and he should do it at every rehearsal.

Each player must be sure of his cues—that is, the last words of the speaker he is to follow, for any drag between speeches, unless it is an intended hesitation, is fatal to the good effect of the play. One of the most glaring defects of the average amateur play is the failure of the following speaker to cut in on an interrupted sentence, as:

JOHN. Why, George, I think I'm sure I——
GEORGE. (*Angrily*) What you think doesn't make any difference.

Too often John's speech is left hanging awkwardly in the air while he waits to be interrupted! In fact, George should cut in—not at the end of the speech—but at "sure." Then the speaker is really interrupted.

It is the director's task to conduct the rehearsals in a business-like manner. If any one of the players is too busy or too indifferent to attend, the director should have a substitute in mind who, though perhaps not so good a player, will at least be more dependable. The work should begin as promptly as possible and the members of the cast held down strictly to business, with a promise of some real fun after the rehearsal is over. One hour is long enough to rehearse a one-act play. From six to eight rehearsals are required for a one-act play, though of course the time varies greatly. The time covered may be from three weeks to a month. That is, if the organization has monthly meetings, the director,

having copies of the play ready, can announce the names of the players at one meeting and be ready for the performance at the next, if the members of the cast can give a reasonable amount of time to the rehearsals. Too much time is often a disadvantage as the players may lose interest.

For the simplest one-act play, special costumes are not necessary, the players wearing their usual clothes or—if they wish a touch of the unusual—borrowing suitable clothes from their friends. Many organizations, in which the young people delight in presenting plays, have a big strong-box in which are kept all costumes, make-up materials and smaller stage properties. Many of these can be used for later plays or lent to other organizations in the neighborhood.

If the play has been given a little publicity among the members, there will be sure to be a record-breaking crowd at the meeting. Everybody will want to know what John or Julia or Mary can do in a real play, and the hard-working director will receive his share of the favorable comments when the play is over. But this first production need not be the last of the uses of the little play. Other organizations will be only too glad to arrange for the players to visit them and give a performance for their members, an excursion which the young people will be sure to enjoy greatly.

Music

Everybody likes to sing and almost everybody can play some sort of musical instrument with a little

training, so vocal and instrumental music should be a large part of the community recreation. During the World War "community sings" became very popular and in most neighborhoods all that is needed to revive an interest in music is an enthusiastic leader for group singing. Each community group should have its active committee on music to organize choruses, duets, and quartettes, and arrange for solo singing. And every country boy or girl with musical talent should be in the local band or orchestra. A violin and piano will make a beginning, and other instruments can be added as other young people learn to play. Many farm families can muster a small orchestra of their own, and if some of the neighbor boys and girls can drop in for the evening with their instruments, one of the best forms of community recreation can be developed.

Dancing and Folk Games

There is a widespread belief among city people that all country people object to any kind of dancing, but this is certainly not borne out by my own observation of country life. Country people do usually object to public dances and to some of the so-called "round dances," but properly supervised dancing of some kinds has always been considered proper. At the very beginning the Grange included in its ritual a harvest dance, similar to the folk dances or the old-time country dances, and though it has been objected to occasionally by individual Grangers, it still holds its place. Certainly there cannot be any very serious objection to it among the 800,000

country members, or it would long since have been taken out of the ritual.

It is fortunate that the country men and women take so liberal a view, for there is nothing which young people resent more than objections to things which they can honestly see no harm in—and certainly the Virginia reel and the folk dances, and the rhythmic dancing now becoming so popular among the girls, are quite innocent. Rhythmic dancing is particularly valuable for little country girls because it gives them grace and ease of manner as nothing else will, and a well-rounded physical development.

In connection with the dancing diversions, many of the old-time folk games may well be revived. Nearly every locality has its singing games, country dances, and old ballads of surpassing sweetness that deserve to be known and sung by all the community. Other old-time amusements—the spelling matches, singing contests, fiddlers' contests, quilting parties, etc., may also be revived for community entertainments.

Camping

Most of the young people's organizations lay great stress upon camping as a means of developing initiative and independence of character. Even the country boy, who spends so much of his time in the open air, will enjoy getting "back to nature" and crude primitive conditions in a camp in the woods, whether he is with a group of other boys or the whole family goes camping together. And the country girl, whose regular activities

keep her about the house, needs the contact with new things and new ideals. In the camp she is one of the gang, she learns the boy's standards of honesty and loyalty, how to meet an emergency efficiently, and many interesting facts about birds, animals and trees which she would not learn in the ordinary environment of her home. In fact, any country boy or girl who has not known the joys of "camping out" in the woods has missed one of the pleasantest experiences of country life.

CHAPTER XIII

POLITICS AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

THE woman on the farm has never been greatly excited over woman's rights. In fact she has been a good deal more concerned with her duties than with her rights, and she has had her hands so full of immediate tasks that she has not been inclined to seek for new jobs to conquer. But now that suffrage is an accomplished fact, the progressive country woman considers it just as much her duty to vote as to bake the bread or to feed the chickens—it is a part of her job. In fact, she always took an interest in politics because she had time to read and to think about national problems. A farm woman from South Dakota says: "My mother always kept up with political affairs and told dad whom to vote for when he went to the polls. She could just as well have voted herself." My correspondents agree that home and husband and children come first in the woman's interest, but they doubt whether these can be adequately served unless she takes part in politics. A California woman writes: "Surely a woman must know about the needs of the country, else how is she to train her sons to become honest reliable servants of the public at some later day? Our papers are full of disgusting exposures and I wonder some-

times if the mothers of those men were n't partly to blame." And as the children grow older and release the mother from some of her burdens, she may well give some attention to the public welfare. "I think the thing for middle-aged women to do is to take up some kind of political or organization work," says one woman. "They have matured minds. They have been through the mill. They know what is needed and they ought to turn in and help bring it about."

Many of them wish to use the ballot for the improvement of local conditions. A West Virginia woman says, "Farm women should take part in civic affairs at least to the extent of securing better local conditions; first, in the enforcement of law—prohibition, school attendance, health laws and vital statistics; second, in working and planning for better schools, better sanitary and health conditions, and more wholesome recreation for the country people." And she is to bring these things about not only by voting intelligently but also by accepting offices when she can. A California woman says: "I would favor her accepting an office if she has time for the duties of the position. Women have a fuller realization of the children's needs than the men. A woman school trustee in our district went to the county road supervisors and got a bridge put over a little draw in the road, where there is always a running stream in the rainy season. The men had *talked* about a bridge for years, while the children continued to cross on stepping-stones or, in extra high water time, crept along on a shaky board fence to a place narrow enough to jump across."

They think of voting as the individual citizen's way of influencing the laws, and every farm woman knows what the wrong kind of laws can do to her husband's business. An Ohio woman says, "Farm women are interested in legislation because the occupation of farming is more affected by state and federal laws and by economic conditions the world over than any other business in the United States." If she does not have time to vote, she is a slacker at her job of safeguarding her home from evil influences. One says, "If a woman tells me she has no time for politics, I tell her that the people who are working against our interests are finding time for politics and voting every time they have a chance!"

They believe that a woman should affiliate herself with some party, try to make that party right and then support it whole-heartedly—and get the men to support it, too. In order to do this, they need to learn something of the historical background of the party—why it was formed in the beginning and what its accomplishments have been. This involves a study of politics and in some communities the women have formed "Town and Country Clubs" for the study and discussion of political questions. It is an excellent way of developing a wider view, for the town women need to learn the country attitude toward political matters, as the country women need to know that of the town. Women are all very new in political affairs and it is no disgrace to be ignorant. One cannot step out of one's kitchen or garden and into a knowledge of government at a minute's notice; even the men with all their training admit that they do not know a great deal about it yet.

And the best way for the women to accomplish something in politics is to seek the men's advice and instruction so that everybody can work together for a common cause.

The farm woman's political work will be more effective when she learns how to follow up an issue, once it is made. When a man is elected to the Legislature, or to Congress for a certain purpose, he is much more likely to see the thing through if he knows that his constituents have not forgotten it. So a regular study of legislative programs is important and a brief note of approval or protest from time to time. For the legislator always wants to know what the voters are thinking, and it is well enough to remind him occasionally that you have not changed your mind!

A real advance in human life is always a slow and painful process, and progress is always costly—so if one wants something done for the State or the nation, she must make up her mind that sacrifices are necessary and long-suffering patience. It is likely that for some years the country woman, and every other woman, must be content to work and to study in the field of politics without much active participation, confident that sooner or later she will make a real advance in human welfare.

Women's National Organizations

Ever since the suffrage amendment was ratified, the woman on the farm has felt the surge of feminine forces about her, the rallying of the woman power in organizations of their own to help guide the future

destiny of the nation. New women's organizations are springing up everywhere. It is like a great procession assembling, each unit bearing its own banner, but easily falling into step with all the rest because they are going in the same direction and have in general the same purposes. They are learning to keep in step, and all about the discipline necessary in great and important forces, and the country woman would gladly join with them if it were only made possible.

The women seem to be doing everything at once. The daily paper from the city is half filled with women's activities. Dozens of clubs meet and discuss and lunch and dine together, large conferences, said to be nation-wide in scope, assemble to discuss questions of national legislation, women leaders in politics get together to plan for coming elections. There are mothers' associations and patriotic associations, and forty other choice varieties of associations for women. I sometimes wonder, as I turn the pages of the paper, how the same women can possibly belong to them all, or if they do not, how the many organizations can possibly find women enough to go round.

The number of these movements impressed me so much that I was not surprised to receive a letter from another country woman saying that she was thinking the same thing. She had been reading the reports in the newspapers of the many national meetings and she had begun to wonder—as women always will—why she was not invited. Even when she scanned the reports very carefully, she could not find that any country woman was among those present, though the announce-

ments had plainly stated that all the women of the United States would be represented. Even a women's labor conference did not recognize her as a worker! And she wondered if the leaders had quite forgotten her, or if they thought she had nothing to say.

After a bit of explanation, my correspondent writes:

"I have been reading accounts of the part women are taking in state and national legislation and notice that the farm women have no representation whatever in any conventions conducted by women. Why is this true? Have they not been invited, or are they too indifferent to take part? Two fifths of the women of the United States are rural. From their homes go forth the men and women who are making over and sustaining the life of the city and incidentally the nation. Country women do not pose as reformers, nor do they come with a grievance. They are a group of producers, the mothers of our most worth-while leaders, and are rich in experience and calm thought. Surely their representation in any convention or on any committee would be a benefit worthy of consideration.

"Women in agriculture can be depended upon to do their just share of any phase of labor, whether that labor call for mental, physical or spiritual strength. Can you not take up our cause and aid us in giving the farm woman a chance?"

Perhaps she is wrong about some of these conventions. At least the leaders of the women's movements have explained to me that the farm women were not included in the call, and I tried to pass on their explanations to her as well as I could. But I doubt if she understood. It

is rather confusing to one with a mathematical faculty to be told that a great national conference of representative women left out more than two-fifths of the women of the nation at one fell swoop!

Of course there is no intentional discrimination. The real reason is that the leaders in the many women's movements are the women of the towns and cities, who have been freed from the heavier home duties by modern improvements, and so have had the leisure to become interested in civic and political matters. They see, not the nation as a whole, but the town and the city and the well-organized groups of women workers. Very few country women are yet so free; they are still tied by many of the primitive tasks of the making of a home. But they have felt the new urge for a larger life and as they knead the bread and do the family washing they are having time to think—and, thinking, they realize that if they were on the platform and at the council-table they could say some things which even the city women might do well to hear. One woman told me that every time she did the ironing, she took a topic about which she knew something and delivered an address to an exclusive audience of the baby and the family cat. She said it helped her to arrange her ideas in an orderly fashion and she knew the baby liked it—she was not so sure about the cat! That was a year ago, so that by this time she must have delivered some fifty-two addresses across the ironing board. And yet there are people who think that the country woman has nothing to say!

The fact is that the average club-woman knows very little about country life problems or the agricultural situation. At most, she sees them from the point of view of the quality and quantity of food in her refrigerator or her pantry. A farm is merely a place to get things to eat, at what seem fabulous prices. She does not realize—because her leaders have never yet presented it to her—that the farm problem is a great human problem, and that upon its right solution may depend the very existence of the nation.

It is true the country women are not generally organized in strictly women's organizations, yet they can be easily reached. The various farm organizations include probably 500,000 women altogether. And although these organizations include both sexes, it seems to me that some sort of affiliation might well be worked out between their women members and the city women's organizations. Representation could be made on the basis of their women's membership, so that the farm women could be given a voice in all the general meetings for the advancement of women. And even before such a plan can be matured, it is certainly little enough to ask that country women speakers be invited to address every general women's conference, to give the rural point of view upon the subject under discussion. For the present assumption of leadership by so-called national groups of women which are not really national, has its dangers for the nation as well as for the women's cause. They cannot know American life as it is, and we must doubt them all until they show

a broader outlook upon the problems of the nation as a whole—country life and city life and small town life together.

Farm Women in the Agricultural Conference

For perhaps the first time in history, the country woman was given recognition in national affairs when she was invited to take part in the great Agricultural Conference called by President Harding for January 23, 1922. She did not have a very big place, it is true, for there were only eighteen women to some three hundred men, but at least she was recognized as having brains enough to discuss national questions. Among the country women who answered the call were: Mrs. John B. Black of Maryland, Mrs. Frank B. Black of Pennsylvania, Mrs. Nellie E. Blakeman of Connecticut, Mrs. H. F. Chaffee of North Dakota, Mrs. L. C. Chappell of South Carolina, Mrs. J. W. Jones of Maryland, Mrs. J. C. Ketcham of Michigan, Miss Neale S. Knowles of Iowa, Mrs. Albert Manning of New York, Mrs. W. C. Martin of Texas, Mrs. W. A. Mather of Virginia, Mrs. Charles W. Sewell of Indiana, and Mrs. Carl Williams of Oklahoma.

A few of the women were placed upon the general economic committees dealing with questions of buying and selling, farm labor, etc., but the greater number worked upon Committee No. 11 on the Farm Population and Farm Home. A very bright and clever woman, Mrs. J. C. Ketcham of Michigan, was chairman of that section of the committee dealing with the farm home.

Serving on the same committee were some of the most prominent specialists on country life problems in America, but they soon discovered that the farm women's knowledge of the practical problems of country living was even greater than their own. Most of the women had had experience as leaders of groups of country people. They knew all the handicaps under which the farm people struggle, and had sound and sensible ideas about how these handicaps could be removed or overcome. They knew what could be expected of country people in coöperative, community and church affairs and what could not be expected. They saw very clearly what the trained welfare workers do not always see, that city methods seldom get results in country districts because the ways of thought and the manner of life of the people are different. And they were intent upon securing the approval of the committee for methods which had been found practicable in country places.

It is interesting to glance over the findings of this important committee. Investigation should be made, they suggested, of the farm population to determine the reasons for the shifting of the people, and the best kinds of community work for the different kinds of communities. They also suggested that census reports on the farm population be compiled with as much care as those on the city population, with the line drawn clearly between people living in the open country and those living in the small towns. Heretofore most of the people covered by the so-called "country life statistics" have lived in small towns of less than 1000 population.

In education they suggested that still further atten-

tion be given to rural subjects in the rural schools, including the principles of rural coöperation and home economics. And that secondary schools should be in reach of all the country people so that very young boys and girls need not be sent away from home to school. Extension work in home economics was recommended, provided the workers coöperated with all the rural organizations and did not single out some one for special favors. On the other hand, they asked all the rural organizations to include a study of food, clothing, housing, and child care in their regular programs. In welfare activities they insisted that country communities be given as good service as those in the cities. Free circulating libraries should bring books to the farmer's door, or at least to his nearest village. Health agencies, such as hospitals, dispensaries, etc., should be provided for the country people as well as for the city people.

But most important of all, they decided, was the recognition of the farm woman. In her they saw a tremendous force for good if it were rightly put to work on the problems of the nation. Too much of the talking heretofore has been done by those who persisted in looking upon country life as an economic, rather than a human problem.. In reality, it is both, and there must be a proper consideration given to both sides of the question before our country life situation can be made much better. They saw that country and city must always be inter-dependent and that it is vitally necessary that they know each other and work together with mutual respect and understanding. One recommendation reads as follows:

"Recognizing the farm home is the heart not only of American agriculture but of the nation as well, we strongly urge that its power and influence be fully appreciated and used through the appointment of farm women as well as farm men to official positions in farm organizations, and through the selection of farm women for service on important national and state boards. This equal representation of country and city homes will add to the dignity of country life and serve to bring about a better understanding between country, town and city."

The farm women of the committee resented keenly the present fashion of magazines and newspapers to belittle the country woman, in stories representing her as having few home conveniences and, apparently, even fewer brains. It is true there are many overworked women on the farms—there are also in the city—and many of them work inefficiently. But when the most inefficient members of a large class of women are held up publicly as representing the average, it does much damage not only to their reputation as a class but to their morale as well. For this reason, they deplored greatly "the tendency of the press to depict occasional and extreme conditions of toil or hardship on the part of farm women as representing normal or usual conditions."

It is an important matter, this giving the farm woman a chance to speak her mind. She should demand it as a right and rise to every opportunity as a duty. Country people are always too much inclined to sit back and let someone else do the talking—when in most cases they could add important points to the discussion. Laws and public institutions are brought about by talking, not by

sitting back and thinking, and the country woman should always be ready to open her mouth and speak. It is the only way to be a good citizen and a happy one, for one who takes little part in public affairs will nearly always doubt the justice and the sanity of the public mind. And it is the task of woman on the farm of to-day and to-morrow to see that in all matters bearing upon country life, the nation hears the rural districts speaking, clearly and distinctly.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRUTH ABOUT COUNTRY LIFE

Country and City

I HAVE always felt much in accord with the old country woman on her first visit to the city who asked, "Why don't they build the cities out in the country where they would have more room?" Why, indeed? It is true that city life has its great attractions—the crowding of people together makes it possible for all to have certain comforts and conveniences which in the open country would be impossible. But there are many disadvantages. For it is at best an unnatural way of living, almost unknown to the long generations of our forbears who made us what we are. Some one has said the city is still but an experiment in living, helped out greatly in the last few years by the discoveries of science. And only a travesty on life is that crowded section of New York in which a half million people inhabit a square mile of land. Life in the country is more fundamentally sound because it develops those capabilities for which the race has been bred, in the hand to hand struggle with nature in the work with animals, with green growing things and with the soil.

In the past few years I have been much interested in reading thousands of letters from country women, giving their ideas of the comparative values of country and city life. It was a significant fact that many of the writers were women who had had some years of experience with city life before coming to the country and so knew both sets of conditions from actual experience. The former city woman appreciates the country because she knows what it is to live in a tiny flat with the traffic rumbling by on the street in front and on the alley in the rear, and all the little annoyances of living day after day enclosed by walls so thin that one's every action is likely to be commented upon by the neighbors. She knows what it is to get out of bed before daylight to get breakfast and pack lunch-boxes, so that the men of the family can be off on the long car-ride to their work. She knows what it is to eat stale food day after day with a staler and staler appetite, until the very thought of food is sickening. She has perhaps worked in a factory or an office and stopped every evening at the rank-smelling little delicatessen on the corner to buy food for her evening meal. She has had the experience, possibly, of working hard for ten or twelve years in the city and having at the end nothing more than when she began.

For in the city, fresh air, quiet, light and privacy are commodities—only to be had for much money. Only the near-millionaire can afford rooms as commodious and grounds as spacious as those of the average farm home. Many of the women speak with especial pride of their

country "spare room," that joy of every true woman's heart, long since given over in town houses of middle-class people. The country spare room may be simple, but its gay cretonne curtains and shining furniture, its daintiness unrumpled by the daily living of the family, makes it almost a shrine to the woman who keeps the house. The town woman in the country finds a freedom undreamed of in the days when she felt herself under the constant surveillance of her landlord and her neighbors. She can come and go as she pleases; she can sing all day about her work whether her voice is melodious or not; she can whistle; she can bang out gay little tunes on the piano; she can become a child again in roistering outdoor games with her children. In fact she is the captain of her own soul in all the little things that count so much in a woman's existence.

And it is a pleasure to hear of these women's whole-souled delight in good food. Some of them had long known city food, to which much handling and cold storage and long shipments had done their worst, and they delight greatly in their beautiful well-filled cellars with an esthetic as well as a gastronomic joy. They speak so feelingly of sweet juicy hams and new-laid eggs, golden butter and batches of fragrant white bread, apple pies, berry pies, pumpkin pies, barrels of sparkling cider, fresh crisp vegetables, rich ice cream, luscious watermelons and peaches, pungent mincemeat, and crunchy spiced pickles that the reader is almost consumed with hunger—and envy. It is the supreme satisfaction of the country woman thus to look upon her work for the

family and to find it good, and to know that whatever happens during the long winter, her dear ones will not suffer from hunger.

It is true that the work of the country woman is hard; all the women admit that, and many of them long for the means to pay for labor-saving conveniences which would give them more leisure. But they insist that the hard word is healthful. They boast that they are active and healthy, that their cheeks are rosy and their complexions good and their hair ungrayed at an age when the city woman needs all the aids of the beauty parlors to make herself presentable. It is the endless struggle to "keep up" that changes the looks of a woman, they say—not age or hard work. They know that country life will always call for hard work both of body and brain and they laugh at the fancy pictures one sometimes sees of the farmer riding his plow or milking his cows by machinery, which often lead the city woman to believe that all the drudgery has been taken out of farm work. It is true that the farmer has had some of his burdens lifted by machinery, but the speeding up of production necessary to pay for the high-priced machines has added other burdens both of work and worry, and he still has plenty of use for his good muscles during the farm day. And the country woman expects to work and to train her children to work to keep up with the widely varied activities of the farm home, in which the family comfort is still the wages of much hard labor.

For, though the Lord provides bountifully for country folk, He requires at the same time an initiative on their

part to take advantage of His kind provision. A really shiftless family will almost starve in the midst of plenty, for the want of skill and foresight in preparing for its needs. It is this requirement of our American country life which makes the poor immigrants shun it like the plague. They do not know how to pioneer, how to think for themselves in the American fashion; they must be provided for from meal to meal, from pay check to pay check, without any effort on their part in looking ahead. The country is unkind to them. But the city provides their next meal at the corner store and their thinking, so far as their work is concerned, is done for them by the foreman of the gang—so they love the city and cling to it.

Life has its compensations everywhere, and one cannot judge for another as to the best place to live, because a comfortable life depends so largely upon the type of personality. For the country-minded man, the country is the only place in which he can be really happy, and for the city-minded man, the city is the only place. On the whole, things balance up fairly well. We are all trying our best to escape the great curse of work—yet none of us is escaping, nor ever will escape entirely. If we escape work with our hands, we merely work our brains the harder. If we escape expending our physical energy over the task of life, it usually takes the toll from our nervous energy. So with all our modern labor-saving inventions, the city woman is often over-worked, even though most of the physical burdens have been lifted from her shoulders.

The older women tell me of the great hopes they had

when first the sewing machine became common in the home. It seemed sent direct from heaven to liberate them from toil. Yet in a few years the styles in underwear demanded petticoats full three yards wide, reaching to the floor, and solidly tucked from hem to waistband! Given the machine, the women simply elaborated their garments until they were as much work as before. Such a tyrant does even the best labor-saving invention sometimes become! The modern development of ready-made garments also takes toll of our strength. It is true we are saved the actual making of the garment, but the average woman must spend much worrisome shopping or ordering by mail, before she can assure herself that the quality of the materials and the cut and fit and style are what she desires. We all know that many times it would really be less trouble to sit down at the machine with a good pattern and a known quality of material and produce the garment ourselves—as indeed the country women pretty generally do.

And so in the city the saving of work in one direction merely leads to a complication of life and an addition of non-essentials until one is still busy all the day long. When I meet the city women over their afternoon tea at the home of a friend in the city, I am fairly appalled by their tales of woe—of the incompetent servants, the poor quality of what one buys nowadays, the uncertainty of the workmen who are needed for some jobs around the house, and the general high cost of living. If I ask even the so-called "idle rich," I hear much the same story of the hard conditions of their lives.

Yet I have a great admiration for the city woman.

When a city friend and I are out together, I marvel at her quick replies to the passing comment (my own clever remarks usually occur to me after I have reached home). Her calmness and poise as she threads her way among the automobiles in the street almost awes me—for I am as skittish as a country-bred horse when I set out from one curb to the other. I admire her nimbleness of mind upon the issues of the day and her knowledge of "what is what" among people in the city, and most of all I envy her her unerring taste in suits and hats and shoes and gloves. I envy, too, her quick adjustment to new things. When she learns of a new labor-saving convenience, she does not have to struggle with qualms of fear about its success or its economy. No, she gives it a keen glance or two—adapts herself to the new idea—and is enjoying its benefits long before I am well over the first struggle with my conscience.

So it is a good thing for country and city to get together once in a while, because each has abilities which the other lacks, and an interchange of viewpoints is always good for the soul. There was once a good old rule that the city friends and relatives spent a month in the country in summer and the country folks paid back the visit in full in the winter—and there is no better way (if the bargain is strictly adhered to on both sides), to bring country and city together. Then each can partake of the culture of the other. A city woman who sees the work of the busy farm day will never again be guilty of thinking that a farmer's food "does n't cost him anything." She can often make arrangements for a part of her winter supplies to come direct from the farm she

visits. And the country woman in seeing the city woman's problems day by day, will no doubt find that they are actually more difficult than they seemed at long range. She can also do her shopping for clothing and house furnishings in the city stores where the latest things are on display. And in the end both will be the better for the interchange of experiences.

For when there is friction between country and city in America, it is because of a narrowness of view which emphasizes the accidental peculiarities of the other person. Such a narrowness of view sometimes leads the city woman to think that the country woman is awkward and lacking in social ability, with little of the real culture and graces of the city women she knows. And in her turn the country woman of the narrow view thinks the city woman snobbish and lazy, giving her life to frivolities, perhaps even to immoralities. When as a matter of fact, the women are equally good and equally capable. They are merely exaggerating the worst attributes which each takes on from her environment, and failing to see through to the real woman beneath. Yet if they knew each other better, they would feel the greatest mutual understanding.

The farm woman should feel proud that she lives in the country. Edwin Markham, the great poet, says: "I sometimes think that only men with lop-sided brains love to live in the city. God never made a city—He made a garden. City life is largely the cause of the general nervous breakdown of the race. This is an age of the nerves, and the city is responsible for it. My

ideal is a life that has the freshness and freedom of the country, and yet is within easy access of the town, where men can go and transact business. In my business, that of making verse, I need the peace of the country, which is the peace of God. But I like to come into contact with men, and so I go to town. I think the city of the future will not be crowded by city dwellers—we are coming to know too much for that. But, for the present, man is still lop-sided."

For the ideal life is country and city life blended, with a considerable experience of both for each individual. The people who really get the most out of a city are not those who live in it all the time, but those who visit it occasionally with their minds fresh from contact with a different set of experiences. And perhaps in the same way, the city person can appreciate the country in a way which country-dwellers cannot, because it is not the background of their everyday lives. In England and in France many people so arrange their lives that they can spend a part of the time in each environment. It may be that this is not feasible in America except for the very rich, but at least we Americans have no wish to build a wall about the rural life any more than we wish to build a wall about the city. We want to bring them close together and give every possible opportunity in both for our ambitious young people.

The Truth About Country Life

"It's no time for just talk about country life," a country woman from the West writes me, "somebody's

got to tell the God's truth!" And certainly there never was a time when it was so important to set forth the real facts of country living. Americans generally would like to know the truth about the country, but they are so beset on all sides by half-truths and misstatements that they are in danger of being led astray. Of course there is some justification for the varying moods of writers and speakers upon country life. Somebody has said that one can never really know a great city because it is in reality not one, but millions of cities—because to no two of its citizens does it show the same aspect of its life. So I suppose the open country and its people do show a new phase to every comer, in a changing and many-sided life. But even this is no excuse, it seems to me, for the epidemic shifts of public opinion on our American country life.

We all remember how, just a few years ago, it was the "back to the farm" idea. Every city writer was telling of the joys of country life—the independence of the farmer, the loaded table of food that "did n't cost anything," and the fresh air and sunlight without money and without price. Those of us who lived in the country and still protested about the conditions of our life, the lack of conveniences in our homes, and the less than living wage, were branded as fault-finders, too stupid to appreciate the great blessing of living in the glorious country. Reporters came to interview us and to drink our ambrosial buttermilk fresh from the churn. But whenever we dwelt upon the discouraging side of our life, they put up their notebooks and firmly guided us to other topics. "We must have optimism," they

said. "You are too far removed from the current of popular thought to realize the value of a cheerful view of life." We were, I suppose. Country people are seldom Pollyannas—they face facts that are too real to be set aside as lightly as that.

So the country people were forced to look on while aged clerks and broken-down school teachers drew out their little savings and invested them in bleak acres that would not grow black-eyed peas—much less all those independent joys of country life they had been reading about in the "back to the farm" literature. And naturally, most of them lost their savings, and, broken in health by toil, returned to the city in poverty and distress.

Perhaps it was these disillusioned pilgrims of "back to the farm" that turned the tide of public thinking in the opposite direction. At any rate, it was not long before the country people began to hear that there was something wrong in country life. Again we were interviewed, but this time for the disadvantages of living in the country, and we were about as unsatisfactory as pessimists as we had been as Pollyannas. We insisted upon telling of our country pleasures, our independence and our health. "But you have no bathtubs," they said. "Why, in the city no one would live without a bathtub." Perhaps we had some doubts about that, for we had seen a lot of pictures of city tenements in which the shining white bathtub did not figure, but it did no good to mention them. Even when we explained in detail that in some cases the entire profits of the farm for five years would hardly

pay the bill for installing a complete water system such as they have in the cities, they would not listen. And the reporters went back and spread the word abroad that we country folks were lacking in health and refinement—all because we did not arise and howl in a chorus, at their suggestion, for white bathtubs. Then there was a Commission to study us and all the welfare societies issued leaflets and things that made us feel that we were quite incapable of taking care of our own problems. When all that we needed was a little practical help and not so much talk.

But since the automobile has become so common, public opinion has veered again, and we are hearing a great deal about God's out-of-doors and the broad open spaces where fresh breezes and the kindly fruits of the earth render life delightful. And the city people love to get away in their cars for the day in the woods and fields. But again the country person is not moved to enthusiasm. It is God's out-of-doors, of course, and every spiritually minded country person feels in it the nearness of God—but it is also, just as truly, the devil's out-of-doors. In fact, the fellow who is struggling to raise a crop in spite of potato-bugs, tree-borers, cabbage-worms, and forty thousand other pests, should be pardoned if he thinks that the devil is rather the more powerful! And every country person knows that human nature is just as prone to sin in the country as in the city. The forces of evil may look different out in the fields, but they are all at work, fighting the same old battle.

Another great source of harm to our country life

just now is the complete pessimist. I sometimes think he is the most vicious product of our civilization. It is true that some farmers complain a good deal—and every country person knows that they have a lot to complain of—but no farmer that I know of complains absolutely wholesale. At his worst, if you pin him down to it, he will admit that, though his wheat was a total failure and his hogs all died with cholera, he did make a little something on his apple crop this year. Or that, if they didn't have money for any new clothes, at least the garden did well and there was plenty laid by to eat in the coming winter. The only really whole-souled pessimists on country life I ever met are those who do their complaining from an ulterior motive. But they are a very numerous tribe and are listened to with all too much respect by many of the country people.

I do not mean to imply, however, that all these simon-pure pessimists are rascals. Indeed many of them are actuated by the highest human motives. They see, or think they see, how the hard lot of the farmers can be made easier by governmental help in some direction. And they know that the big appropriations necessary cannot be secured unless the city people are willing. So they undertake, with the best intentions in the world, to show how bad life is in the country, so that even the city people will agree to the spending of their money. They hunt the worst possible conditions to play up to the public, leaving the impression that all country life is as bad as that. Of course we resent it. Nobody likes to have his occupation written up as if he were as bad as the worst person in it!

Some of us get mad and try to talk back to our detractors if we can. But sometimes the country man who has not thought much about the conditions of his life becomes very much depressed by these stories. He has not realized before how very hard he had to work. All the city people, he reasons, must be doing much better than himself. Perhaps he sells out and goes to the city. Or if he cannot leave the farm he is discouraged and unhappy because he feels sure that somebody is not giving him a square deal. In any case, the loss of self-respect and belief in their chosen occupation does great harm to many of the very people that such propaganda is intended to help—far more harm, it seems to me, than can be counteracted by any amount of governmental assistance. It is true that American country life needs to be put upon a better governmental footing. There are many changes in the laws toward which those who have been thinking about country life have been working for a long time—changes to place our rural life upon a basis more nearly equal to that of the city life of America. But it ought to come about without destroying the morale of the country people.

But the past master extraordinary at bewailing the woes of the farmers is the self-seeking politician in some country districts. He realizes that the farmers and their wives have the votes to elect a candidate if they can be persuaded to stand together as a class, and he at once proclaims himself as the Moses to lead them out of their wilderness. American agriculture is going

to ruin, he cries aloud. The hand of every man is against the farmer. It is time for the farmer to rise and overthrow these oppressors and run things to suit himself. Wall street, the bankers, the stores and the city wage-earners alike feel the brunt of his oratorical bludgeon as the sworn enemies of the farmer class. He tells the country people that governmental changes are the sure cure for all the ills that ail them. Even potato-bugs and the boll-weevil, he seems to say, will be amenable to legislation if only the right man is elected to legislate against them—and of course *he* is the right man. If he is not elected, all the farm people are doomed to destruction. It is a great speech. But the farm people generally, though they may applaud him at the time, have time to think things over as they go about their work, and they are quite likely to remember that the impassioned pessimist on country life has previously never done anything much to save the nation except to hold some little political office and graft from the county treasury!

For the country people are not easily swayed in their deeper convictions—that is the reason they are not able to keep up with all the varying popular opinion of country life. They know from experience the real truth about country life, which lies somewhere betwixt and between that ignorant optimism with its rosy spectacles and the out-and-out pessimism of the time-serving politician. Farm life will always have its disadvantages. The chief of these is that, except under unusual conditions, work on the farm will probably bring in

less money than the same amount and quality of work in the crowded city. It will be some years, no doubt, before the average farm home will have as many conveniences and comforts as the average city home, and the rural schools may remain somewhat inferior to those of the city. It is likely, too, that the country woman will continue to have more work and fewer social pleasures than her sister in the city. These are serious disadvantages, but the wise person often takes all these fully into account and still elects to stay upon the farm.

Farming is almost the oldest occupation of the race. A love for stirring the soil and planting the seed and watching the growing plants and caring for the animals has been inbred through so many centuries that it has become an instinct. Many men and women are born farmers, with this instinct so highly developed that no other occupation ever satisfies them in any real way, however easy it may be or however much money it may bring them. We say they are country-minded, for wherever they may live their thoughts are in the country among the things that appeal to them. Many a city man is unhappy even in a good business because at heart he feels that the only task worth while is that of making things grow out of doors. He gives what time he must to his business but every leisure moment is spent on his seed catalogues, his few chickens, and his little backyard garden. Sometimes, it is true, this is a mere sentimentality, but often it is a real feeling in his heart that his daily business is not worth while.

Such a man is usually happier on the farm, even though he and his family lack many of the comforts of the city. His daily work so appeals to his natural tastes and instincts that he feels no desire to turn to anything else for recreation. He knows that his task is worth while because it provides for the fundamental needs of the race. This, it seems to me, explains in part why so many men who could easily make a much larger income in the city stay upon the farm year after year. Their reward is that great satisfaction of heart of the man who has found his work, and they know that is one supremely good thing which money cannot buy.

But this does not mean that the farmer is, or ought to be, contented with the present financial returns of his toil. I have been told that the American farmer is better off in financial returns and in the comforts of his home than the farmer of any other nation in the world. Perhaps this is true. But the American farmer is not looking at the other nations, he is looking at his own, and at the unevenness of rewards between the workman in the city and the workman on the farm. And he rightly demands that a proportionate share of the good things of life be given him for his labor. Literature and history give us pictures of contentment upon the farm under the worst conditions. The family in Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night" was happy though extremely poor. And the American pioneer family often lived in a one-room cabin with a dirt floor, and a few boards laid across the joists for a loft. They were content because the shelter was the best they could provide under the

conditions and few of their neighbors had any better.

But at the present time in America, the farmer who lives in a log shelter is not content, nor should he be. He sees all about him a higher standard of living and he knows that his children are being looked down upon by the other children of the community. And he is a very stupid person indeed if, when he finds his honest toil so unremunerative comparatively, he does not do as so many other country folks have been doing lately—go to town and get a job. This is the saving grace in American country life. The Scotch cotter had little opportunity to better himself, but in America social conditions are still so fluid that no one need live in the country unless he chooses to do so. And this requires that our country life must be made sufficiently attractive for the required number of persons to be drawn to it to produce the food for the nation.

The present wave of discontent among the farm people is not so much because they are receiving such low prices for their products, grievous as that is, as because they believe that they have not been receiving a just share of the national profits. During the war, the rise in prices of farm products brought an opportunity to the farm family which was eagerly seized upon. With the increase in income the family could dress better than before, thousands of farm homes were fitted with electric light and water systems, and the new automobile took the family on long trips and on visits to the city. They suddenly realized how primitive had been their previous way of life. For instance, the country woman began comparing her lot with that of the city woman.

She saw the city woman provided at a reasonable price and at no trouble to herself with electricity for power, light and heat for many household conveniences. She saw the great city laundries doing a thousand women's work at one time, and the retail store automobile bringing food-stuffs to the door in an advanced stage of preparation. She saw the opportunities for education which the city woman had in the community centers, reading clubs, mothers' meetings, etc. She saw the elaborately equipped schools and the expert teachers provided for the city woman's children. And naturally she came to demand some of these good things for her own farm family. They cannot be provided unless the farmer's income is considerably increased, so the immediate aim of the farm people is to secure a greater return for their work so that they can live as well in the country as the middle-class families live in the modern American city.

Our American country life is now in the process of a great change and not even the wisest prophets undertake to say whether the conditions of the future will be greatly better or greatly worse. On the one hand, in the increasing tenantry and small farming, there seems to be a movement toward an ignorant peasantry on the land such as prevails in some European countries. But on the other hand the American farmer in the midst of the most trying conditions, is so rapidly adapting himself and increasing the efficiency of his labor and of his acres that it seems probable that he will be able to hold his own in spite of the untoward conditions.

At any rate it is probable that the life of to-morrow

will be different from that of the past. But from one end of the nation to the other, the country women are hoping that somehow all that was best in the past will be saved and builded into the future. They are thinking of the nation as well as of their families, for they feel deeply that no nation can prosper for long unless there is a happy and contented people upon the land. As Lloyd-George says of England: "The country is much healthier for brain and muscle and heart than the towns. It is a thing which, if a man has got it into his composition, enables him to bear the worst wear and tear of life. He has got the soil of England, Scotland and Wales with him, with its cheerful endurance and warmth in every fiber of his nature. Get the people back to the land—the resurrection of everything. You will find the country not a picture of desolation, but England will be a garden ringing with cheerful and contented life. I came from an agricultural district and spent all my early life there; and I have been more convinced since the war than ever before that the security of this country depends largely upon the development of the rural life."

It is this permanence and worth-whileness of country life which most appeals to the American woman on the farm. She does not have to be told by statesman—she knows—that the only permanent nation is builded first upon the soil. She does not need statistics to tell her that those children who are given a happy childhood in the wide range of the open country are better prepared for the race of life. She knows it instinctively. And so she is willing to bear her many burdens and to work

toward the perpetuation of farm life in order that our American people can continue to be as wholesome and healthy and happy in mind and body and spirit as they have been in the hearty days of the pioneer past.

APPENDIX

THE FARM WOMAN'S BOOKSHELF

Books can be ordered direct from the publishers or through a bookseller. Farmers' Bulletins can be ordered from the Division of Publications, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., or from the Congressman from your district.

THE HOME

"Games for the Playground, Home, School and Gymnasium," Jessie H. Bancroft, Macmillan Company, New York City.

"Fagots for the Fireside," Lucretia Hall, Houghton Mifflin Company, New York City.

"Home Play; Suggestions for Recreation in the Home and Neighborhood." 40 cents. Playground and Recreation Association of America, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

"Child Training," Angelo Patri. D. Appleton & Company, New York City.

THE FARMHOUSE

"How to Furnish the Small Home," Sanders, 25 cents.

"Plan Book of Small Homes," 35 cents. Better Homes in America, 1653 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D. C.

Farm Home Conveniences, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 927.

Electric Light and Power in the Farm Home.
Agriculture Yearbook, 1919, Separate 799.

The Farm Kitchen as a Workshop, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 607.

Water Systems for Farm Homes, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 941.

Operating a Home Heating Plant, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1194.

Chimneys and Fireplaces, How to Build Them, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1230.

Harvesting and Storing Ice on the Farm, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1078.

Sewage and Sewerage of Farm Homes, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1227.

Securing a Dry Cellar,
Agriculture Yearbook, 1919, Separate 824

Floors and Floor Coverings, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1219.

The Well-Planned Kitchen,
Circular 189, Dept. of Agriculture.

One Register Furnaces (*Pipeless Furnaces*) Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1174.

Homemade Fireless Cookers and Their Use, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 771.

THE GROUNDS AND GARDENS

"Hardy Plants for Cottage Gardens," Albee. $2.00.
Henry Holt & Co., New York City.

"Art out of Doors," Van Rensselaer, $1.75.
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.

Permanent Fruit and Vegetable Gardens, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1242.

Home Gardening in the South, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 934.

The Farm Garden in the North, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 937.

Vegetable Seeds for the Home and Market Garden, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1390.

How to Grow an Acre of Potatoes, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1190.

Diseases and Insects of Garden Vegetables, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1371.

Home Storage of Vegetables, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 879.

Celery Growing, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1269.

Cucumbers, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 254.

Beans, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 289.

Onion Culture, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 354.

Cabbage, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 433.

Asparagus, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 829.

Beautifying the Farmstead, Farmers' Bulletin, No 1087.

Planning the Farmstead, Farmers' Bulletin, No. 1132.

Roses for the Home, Farmers' Bulletin, No 750.

THE HOME BUSINESS

"Every-Day Business for Women," Wilbur.
Houghton, Mifflin Company, New York City.

"The Boston Cooking School Cook Book," Farmer,
Little, Brown & Company, Boston, Mass.

"Food, Health and Growth; a Discussion of the Nutrition of Children," L. Emmett Holt. $1.50.
Macmillan Company, New York City.

"Infant Care," Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, Bulletin No. 8. 5 cents, Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

"Week of Menus for Children, Two to Six," 5 cents.
American Child Health Association,
370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.

"Diet for the School Child," Health Education Leaflet, No. 2. 5 cents.
Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

"Materials for the Household," 25 cents,
Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.
"Safety for the Household," 15 cents,
Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C.
A System of Farm Cost Accounting, Farmers' Bulletin 572.
Value of Records to the Farmer,
Separate from Yearbook, 1917, No. 735.
Farm Bookkeeping, Farmers' Bulletin 511.
Farm Inventories, Farmers' Bulletin 1182.
Farm Household Accounts, Farmers' Bulletin 964.
Baking in the Home, Farmers' Bulletin 1136.
Removal of Common Stains, Farmers' Bulletin 861.
School Lunches, Farmers' Bulletin 712.
Housecleaning Made Easy, Farmers' Bulletin 1180.
Home Laundering, Farmers' Bulletin 1099.
Milk and its Uses in the Home, Farmers' Bulletin 1359.
Food for Young Children, Farmers' Bulletin 717.
Good Proportions in the Diet, Farmers' Bulletin 1313.
Honey and its Uses in the Home, Farmers' Bulletin 653.
Cheese and its Economical Uses in the Diet, Farmers' Bulletin 487.
Bookkeeping in the Clover Region, Farmers' Bulletin 1215.
Beekeeping in the Buckwheat Region, Farmers' Bulletin 1216.
Beekeeping in the Tulip Tree Region, Farmers' Bulletin 1222.
Strawberries, Preparing for Market, Farmers' Bulletin 979.
Preparation of Peaches for Market, Farmers' Bulletin 1266.
Feeding Hens for Egg Production, Farmers' Bulletin 1067.
Marketing Poultry, Farmers' Bulletin 1377.
Marketing Eggs, Farmers' Bulletin 1378.

THE WOMAN HERSELF

"Secrets of Distinctive Dress," Picken.
Woman's Institute, Scranton, Pa.

"The Expectant Mother in the House of Health," 10 cents.
"The Baby in the House of Health," 10 cents.
American Child Health Association,
370 Seventh Avenue, New York City.
"The Gracious Hostess," a book of etiquette.
Bobbs Merrill Company, Indianapolis, Ind.
Selection and Care of Clothing, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1089.
The Paper Dress Form,
Department of Agriculture Circular 207.

THE BOY AND THE GIRL

"Farm Boys and Girls," W. A. McKeever,
The Macmillan Company, New York City.
"The American Country Girl," Martha Foote Crowe, $1.50
F. A. Stokes, 443 Fourth Ave., New York City.
"Radio Simplified," Kendall and Koehler, $1.00
John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia, Pa.
"The Complete Radio Book," Yates and Pacent, $2.00
The Century Company, New York City.
"Garments for Girls," Schmidt, $1.50
The Century Company, New York City.
"The Outdoor Handy Book," Daniel C. Beard,
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.
"Recreation for Girls," Lina and Adelia Beard.
Charles Scribner's Sons, New York City.
"A Hundred Things a Girl Can Make," $2.50.
J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, Pa.
"The Star People and the Sky Movies," Gaylord Johnson, $1.50
The Macmillan Company, New York City.
"Everyday Mysteries, Easy Science," Charles Greeley Abbot,
$2.00 The Macmillan Company, New York City.
"Camping," Horace Kephart, 75 cents,
The Macmillan Company, New York City.

"My Health Book," for girls, 10 cents.
American Child Health Association
370 Seventh Ave., New York City.
"Height, Weight, Age Tables for Boys and Girls," 5 cents.
Bureau of Education, Dept. of Interior, Washington, D. C.
"Classroom Weight Record, including Height, Weight, Age Tables." Useful for keeping home records, 5 cents.
Bureau of Education, Dept. of Interior, Washington, D. C.
"Boy Scouts' Handbook," 50 cents.
Boy Scouts of America, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City.
"Camp Fire Girls' Handbook," 50 cents.
Camp Fire Girls of America, 31 E. 17th St., New York City.
"Scouting for Girls," 75 cents.
Girl Scouts of America, 189 Lexington Ave., New York City.

"Bird Guide, Land Birds East of the Rockies," Chester A. Reed, $1.50.
"Flower Guide, Wild Flowers East of the Rockies," Reed.
"Western Bird Guide," Reed.
"The Tree Guide," Rogers.
"The Butterfly Guide," Holland.
"Western Flower Guide," Saunders.
Doubleday, Page and Company, Garden City, N. Y.

Bird Houses and How to Build Them, Farmers' Bulletin 609.
Attracting Birds in the Northeastern States, Farmers' Bulletin 621.
Birds Useful to the Farmer, Farmers' Bulletin 630.
Birds of the Southeastern United States, Farmers' Bulletin 755.
Attracting Birds in Middle Atlantic States, Farmers' Bulletin 844.

Attracting Birds in East Central States, Farmers' Bulletin 912.

Plants, Collecting for Study, Farmers' Bulletin 586.

Insects, Collecting for Study, Farmers' Bulletin 606.

THE SCHOOL

"Country Life and the Country School," Mabel Carney,
Row, Peterson & Co., Chicago, Ill.

"Farm Accounting in Rural Schools," Circular Vol. IX, No. 2,
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

"A Complete Farm Record, for Use in Teaching Farm Accounting in Rural Schools," Vol. IX, No. 3,
Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

THE CHURCH

"Churches of Distinction in Town and Country," Edmund de S. Brunner, $1. 50
George H. Doran Company, New York City.

"A Handbook of the Community Church Movement," David R. Piper,
The Community Churchman Company, Indianapolis, Ind.

"The Farmers' Church," Warren H. Wilson,
The Century Company, New York City.

BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

Home Reading Courses,
Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Washingington, D. C.

Readers living in the following States should apply to the Director of Extension in their State University for information and direction, which will be given free of charge: Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, North

Carolina, North Dakota, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

Book Wagons, American Library Association,
78 East Washington St., Chicago, Ill.

A County Library,
American Library Association, Chicago, Ill.

A Shelf of Books for a One-Room School,
American Library Association, Chicago, Ill.

Stories for Young Children, Library Leaflet No. 6,
Department of Interior, Bureau of Education,
Washington, D. C.

The Forest Poetic, book of country verse. Postage 5 cents.
American Tree Association, Washington, D. C.

THE COMMUNITY

"The Farmer and His Community," Dwight L. Sanderson,
Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York City.

"Coöperative Marketing," Herman Steen.
American Farm Bureau Federation, Chicago, Ill.

"A List of Health Films." More than 300 titles of films on health subjects for rent or sale. 35 cents.
National Health Council, 370 Seventh Ave., New York City.

"Roadside Planting,"
Portland Cement Association. Offices at New York City, Atlanta, Ga., Portland, Ore., Kansas City, Mo., etc.

The Rural Community Fair,
Agricultural Experiment Station, Madison, Wisc. Bulletin 307.

Home Economics Exhibits for Community Fairs, Circular No. 247.
Agricultural College, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.

Lifting the Country Community by its Own Boot Straps, Circular 255. College of Agriculture, Morgantown, W. Va.

Status and Results of Boys' and Girls' Club Work, Circular 192. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Rest Rooms for Women in Marketing Centers,
Separate from Dept. of Agriculture Yearbook, 1917, No. 726.

A Successful Rural Coöperative Laundry,
Separate from Dept. of Agriculture Yearbook, 1915, No. 668.

Farmers' Telephone Companies, Farmers' Bulletin 1245.

Rural Community Buildings in the United States, Farmers' Bulletin No. 825.

Plans of Rural Community Building, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1173.

Organization of Community Buildings, Farmers' Bulletin 1192. Bulletin 1192.

Uses of Rural Community Buildings, Farmers' Bulletin No. 1274.

SOCIAL LIFE

"Producing Amateur Entertainments," Helen Ferris,
E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City.

"The Little Country Theater," Alfred G. Alvord, $2.50
The Macmillan Company, New York City.

"The Grange Master and the Grange Lecturer," Jennie Buell,
Harcourt, Brace & Co., New York City.

"Rural Social Problems," C. J. Galpin, $2.00
The Century Co., New York City.

Publications of Playground and Recreation Association of America. 315 Fourth Avenue, New York City.
"Rural and Small Community Recreation," 50 cents,
"What Can We Do? Social Games," 25 cents.
"List of Dramas Including Full Evening Plays and One-Act Plays," 10 cents.

"Graded List of Plays for Girls' and Women's Clubs," 10 cents.

"Selected List of Plays and Operettas for Children and Young People," 10 cents.

"Full Evening Plays suitable for High School Use," 10 cents.

"Inexpensive Costumes for Plays, Festivals and Pageants," 25 cents.

"List of Pageants and Pageant Material," 15 cents.

"Everybody Neighbors thro Song," community music, 10 cents.

"Christmas Carols," ten favorite carols, 70 cents per 100.

"Community Songs," 80 cents per 100.

"Community Hymns," 25 favorites, $1.15 per 100.

"Games and Play for School Morale," 25 cents.

Country Plays by Mary Meek Atkeson,
Orange Judd Publishing Co., New York City.

"The Cross Roads Meeting House," three acts, eleven characters, 35 cents.

"The Good Old Days," country life pageant, 50 to 200 persons, 35 cents.

"Don't!" one act play, six characters, 25 cents.

"The Will," one-act play, three characters, 25 cents.

Dances, Drills and Story Plays, Nina B. Lamkin,
T. S. Denison Company, 623 Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

Plays for the Country Theater, Extension Bulletin 53.
New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y.

The Country Theater, Cornell Reading Course for the Farm, Lesson 153.
College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y.

The Historical Pageant in the Rural Community, Extension Bulletin 54.

College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y.
Rural Planning—The Social Aspects, Farmers' Bulletin 1325.

POLITICAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

"The Woman Voter's Manual," Forman and Shuler, $1.00
The Century Co., New York City.
"Parliamentary Law," Nanette B. Paul, $1.25.
The Century Co., New York City.
"The American Government," $1.00.
Frederick J. Haskin, 1220 N. Capitol St., Washington, D. C.
"David Lubin, A Study in Practical Idealism," Agresti.
Little, Brown & Co., Boston, Mass.